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LETTERS TO CHILDREN IN THEIR TEENS

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F. OSMUND, O.F.M.,

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Die 11 *Novembris*, 1909.

LETTERS TO CHILDREN IN THEIR TEENS

EDITED BY A DOMINICAN FATHER

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NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO
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PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE
1910

Dedication

"IN MEMORIA ÆTERNA ERIT JUSTUS"

IN LOVING MEMORY OF THE

VERY REV. FATHER THOMAS GREENOUGH, O.P.

(*Of the English Dominican Province*)

WHO, DURING HIS FORTY-SIX YEARS OF PRIESTHOOD,

THIRTY OF WHICH WERE GIVEN TO

PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD, B.W.I., AND SIX TO

THE NEIGHBOURING ISLAND OF GRENADA,

WHERE HIS HOLY DEATH TOOK PLACE

ON DECEMBER 12, 1907,

LABOURED WITH UNWEARIED ZEAL FOR THE

SOULS OF CHILDREN

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

THE fact that these "Letters to Children," now printed in book form by the courtesy of the editor of the Trinidad *Catholic News*, were written for this paper, and published in its pages, during the year 1908, explains the occurence of occasional local allusions, which could not be omitted without mutilating considerably the passages in which they appear.

CONTENTS

LETTER		PAGE
I.	THE CIRCUMCISION—THE EPIPHANY	1
II.	THE HOLY BIBLE	7
III.	SAINTS OF THE OLD LAW	11
IV.	FIGURES OF CHRIST	15
V.	PRAYER-BOOK OF THE HOLY FAMILY	19
VI.	POETRY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT	23
VII.	THE MODERN MOLOCH	26
VIII.	MISSA CANTATA—I	31
IX.	MISSA CANTATA—II	34
X.	CARNIVAL AND COMPLINE	39
XI.	AN INFANT'S DEATH	45
XII.	FLOWERS AND FUNERALS	49
XIII.	JOY IN A GOOD CONFESSION	54
XIV.	INDULGENCES	62
XV.	THE PRICE OF OUR PRIVILEGES	66
XVI.	CEREMONIES OF HOLY WEEK	71
XVII.	EASTER	76
XVIII.	APPARITIONS OF OUR LORD—I	82
XIX.	APPARITIONS OF OUR LORD—II	88
XX.	MADONNA MIA	92
XXI.	PRAYER—ROGATIONS	97
XXII.	THE ASCENSION	100
XXIII.	"THINGS ARE NOT WHAT THEY SEEM"	103
XXIV.	PENTECOST	107
XXV.	TRINITY SUNDAY, ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, CORPUS CHRISTI	112
XXVI.	THE SACRED HEART	118
XXVII.	THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD	124

LETTER		PAGE
XXVIII.	THE LIFE OF THE WORLD	129
XXIX.	SCAPULARS—THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS	135
XXX.	ANSWERS FOR NON-CATHOLICS—I	139
XXXI.	THE DOMINICAN SPIRIT—I	144
XXXII.	THE DOMINICAN SPIRIT—II	148
XXXIII.	THE ASSUMPTION—WORDS OF SOLOMON APPLIED TO OUR LADY	152
XXXIV.	THE NEW TESTAMENT	158
XXXV.	THE WORDS OF THE WORD	164
XXXVI.	PRAYER FOR THE POPE AND THE CHURCH	170
XXXVII.	YOUR CATHOLIC INHERITANCE	177
XXXVIII.	CONSOLING WORDS OF OUR LORD	184
XXXIX.	THE HOLY ANGELS	191
XL.	THE ROSARY	197
XLI.	THE BATTLE OF LEPANTO	202
XLII.	PAX	207
XLIII.	ANSWERS FOR NON-CATHOLICS—II	214
XLIV.	ALL SAINTS	219
XLV.	PURGATORY	226
XLVI.	WE HAVE NOT HERE A LASTING CITY	233
XLVII.	PROVIDENCE	239
XLVIII.	ADVENT	245
XLIX.	FIGURES OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN	250
L.	ACTUAL GRACE	257
LI.	CHRISTMAS	264
LII.	SALVE REGINA	269

LETTERS TO CHILDREN IN THEIR TEENS

I

The Circumcision—The Epiphany

My dear Children,

I offer you these letters as one who has travelled a good deal would offer advice and information to a young friend about to start on his first journey. As Manrique, a Catholic warrior of old Spain (1479), beautifully puts it in his *Coplas*, which Longfellow has translated:

> "This world is but the rugged road
> Which leads us to the bright abode
> Of peace above;
> So let us choose that narrow way
> Which leads no traveller's foot astray
> From realms of love."

I wish to make your journey easier and happier by teaching you to understand more fully than you do at present Catholic truths and practices, and to find for the sorrows and difficulties of this life joy and strength in the right use of them.

On the day of His Circumcision, the eighth after His birth, Our Lord received the adorable

name of Jesus, made known to His blessed Mother by the Archangel Gabriel at the Annunciation. Do you bow your head reverently when you pronounce this holy name, or hear it pronounced? There is an indulgence of fifty days (*it does not mean fifty days off your purgatory*, but as much off as would have been remitted by fifty days of public penance) each time you do so. As it occurs fifty times in five decades of the Rosary, you may gain 2,500 days by doing it. If, while you are young, you acquire this habit, together with that of always making the sign of the Cross slowly and correctly, you will keep it all your life, and you will never be of the number of those who make the sign of the Cross somewhat as if they were driving away a mosquito.

This feast reminds me to call your attention to the three kinds of *obedience* mentioned in our Catechism, and required of all Catholics, which the Gospel tells us were practised by Our Blessed Lord, Who came to be our *Model* as well as our Saviour. They are these: First, obedience to the laws of Religion; second, obedience to our parents and those who hold their place; third, obedience to the Government and the laws of our country. After all that you have learned about the Jewish religion, you must surely understand that its observances alone were pleasing to Almighty God during the time of waiting for the coming of Christ, the Messias, and the founding of His one true Catholic Church, to which by a special grace

of His mercy we belong. Our Lord came to give us an example of everything pleasing to God, so, as His Church was not completely founded till the descent of the Holy Ghost, He observed all the laws concerning religious ceremonies which God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. When eight days old He was circumcised according to God's command to Abraham; when forty days He was presented to God in the Temple; at twelve years of age we find Him going to the Feast of the Pasch in the Temple of Jerusalem with His holy Mother and St. Joseph. Before beginning His public life He went to be baptized by St. John, because it was the right thing at the time when His holy precursor was preaching and baptizing. The latter, knowing Him to be his *God* made man, hesitated, saying, "*I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me?*" to whom Our Lord gave this answer: "*Suffer it to be so now; for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice.*" During His public life we find Him often in the Temple and in the synagogues, and He ate with His disciples the Paschal Lamb before instituting at His Last Supper the Holy Eucharist, of which the Paschal Lamb was a figure—"*Observata lege plene,*" St. Thomas tells us in the "Pange Lingua." Not only have we these numerous examples of Christ's obedience to the Church, we have also His words: "*If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican.*"

With regard to obedience to parents, and to

those who fill their place, surely the fact that the Holy Ghost, Who directed those that wrote the Gospels, did not inspire them to relate a single event of Our Lord's life between the age of twelve and that of thirty (eighteen years; more than half His life), except this only one, "*He went down with them to Nazareth, and was subject to them,*" shows us how much importance we must attach to the perfect observance of the Fourth Commandment—"*Honour thy father and thy mother*"—for disobeying them is certainly not honouring them.

Our Catechism tells us to obey also the "civil authorities"—*i.e.*, those placed over us by the Sovereign or the Government of our country. Surely you remember Our Lord's answer when His enemies thought to ensnare Him by asking Him a question that would compel Him to reply in a way that would offend one party or the other—the Roman masters or the Jews groaning under their yoke—and He did neither the one thing nor the other. In these words, "*Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's,*" He taught both them and us that civil authorities are to be obeyed so long as they do not prevent us from "rendering to God the things that are God's." When they ask of us idolatry, as in the days of the persecutions by the Roman Emperors, or schism and heresy, as in England in the sixteenth century, by His grace we must disobey them even unto death, as the martyrs did.

The Circumcision—The Epiphany

The great Feast of the Epiphany is near at hand. Its name means " manifestation," and it is so called because on this day Christ manifested Himself to the Gentiles (those who were not Jews) in the persons of the three Magi, or Kings, as they are usually called. Like holy Job, they did not belong to the chosen people of God, and, like him, they show us how less-favoured ones, by following the light of their conscience, can serve Him, and thus obtain greater grace. Some writers believe that they followed the wonderful star for about two years before they reached Judæa. This *star* had been spoken of twenty-three centuries before by the soothsayer Balaam, who, called to Moab by Balac, the King, to curse the Israelites, tried three times to do so, and being compelled to bless them, broke out on the third occasion into these beautiful prophetic words: " *How beautiful are thy tabernacles, O Jacob, and thy tents, O Israel! As woody valleys, as watered gardens near the rivers, as tabernacles which the Lord hath planted, as cedars by the water side. A* STAR *shall arise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel.*" Tradition tells us that Melchior was a European, Balthasar an Asiatic, and Gaspar an African. You must have noticed that they are always represented thus—a white man, an Indian, a negro. The relics of these holy Kings, brought from Constantinople in the fourth century, were presented to the Archbishop of Milan, and reposed in the cathedral of that city till 1163, when Frederick

Barbarossa, as a reward for services rendered him by Reinald, Archbishop of Cologne, when Milan fell into his power, transferred them to the latter. The present marvellously beautiful Cathedral of Cologne was begun in 1248. Its construction has been carried on during more than six centuries, and it is not yet considered complete.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

II

The Holy Bible

My dear Children,

Let us chat about the tower of the Sacred Heart Church.* Some of you may have climbed up its eighty-nine steps, and made close acquaintance with Patrick, Thomas, and Cuthbert, the beautiful bells at the top. I see you are disgusted, and I know you are saying to yourselves: "It was to have been Catholic practices, and now it is a tower." Have patience. I hope not to be so wearisome as the man of interminable locusts in one of your Readers, but, like him, I must say: "I cannot tell you what comes after before I have done with what goes before."

To return to the tower. You were not there when it was built some fifteen years ago, but I know many who were, and they tell me that the foundation was very deep indeed, and the lowest part of the walls four feet thick. I believe this. I know it was necessary, and without a deep and

* Erected in Port of Spain by the Very Rev. Father Thomas Greenough, O.P.; opened December 3, 1882. Its beautiful bell-tower, visible far out in the Gulf of Paria; its stations of the Cross, painted by Westlake, A.R.A.; and its magnificent stained-glass windows, are much and deservedly admired.

solid foundation it would long ago have come to grief. I wish to build up in your minds a beautiful tower of Catholic thought and feeling, and if I do not attend to its foundation, it will tumble down as easily as your card towers do when your brother shakes the table.

To-day I must speak to you of the Bible. Disappointment again! First a little true story. A holy priest (R.I.P.) in Europe, having to preach on the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, began his sermon thus: "My brethren, there is a Name; it is above all names; it is not the name of Mary." I have spoken of a foundation, and now I speak of the Bible, and I begin by saying most emphatically: "The Bible is not the foundation of our Catholic faith." Protestants say it is the foundation of theirs, but theirs is not faith: it is faiths. Each Protestant may build on the foundation of the Bible a different one. Now God is the Truth, and the Truth is one, and that it cannot be when each person clings to his own interpretation. It is true that the Bible is not the foundation of our faith, but it is necessary to put into our foundation a clear idea, first, of what Catholics must believe about the Bible; second, of how they must use it. Then we shall have to speak of many details when we consider separately the Old and the New Testament.

What dreadful things people say sometimes out of ignorance! The Bible is the written word of God, but without the living authority of God's

Church how could we be sure of this? We cannot interpret it for ourselves; we must receive the interpretation from the Church, just as a medical or legal student accepts the explanations of his professors. Are we to read the Bible? Not, as Protestants do, the whole of it indiscriminately. The whole is not for everyone. Even among the Jews there was a rule which forbade women to read certain parts of the Old Testament before the age of thirty. When a Protestant makes in your presence what I call "a Bible fuss," and accuses Catholics of various faults with regard to it, just ask him (or her) where the Protestant Church (or rather Churches) got the Bible from? Who, like a tender mother, preserved the Holy Scriptures during the three hundred years of bloody persecutions by the Roman Emperors? Who kept them safe from destruction when the barbarian hordes tore to pieces the mighty Roman Empire, and carried fire and sword all over Europe? Who were they that, hundreds of years before the invention of printing, month after month—nay, year after year — sat in the scriptorium, *Pax* in their hearts, and the glory of God and the salvation of their neighbour in their minds, patiently copying and adorning with beautiful miniatures and illuminations the Holy Bible? Was it not those admirable Benedictines whom they ungratefully call "those lazy monks"? Many of these talkers, their detractors, are remarkable

only for their inconceivable ignorance of the simplest historical facts. Again, who told them that the Holy Bible is the written word of God? To which of their ignoble progenitors did God send an angel with a message to that effect? Was it to Luther or to Calvin? I have read that the former received visits from quite another kind of angel. They may talk till they are hoarse. From the Catholic Church they received the Bible; from her they learned that it is God's Holy Word; then they used it their own way, turning out of it what they chose, explaining it as they liked, and employing to their own destruction and that of the dupes who followed them what God had given for their salvation.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

III

Saints of the Old Law

My dear Children,

I have a great deal to say to you to-day. First, I want to talk about your grandfather. I do not think you know him well or esteem him sufficiently. He is mine also, and he reckons among his grandchildren the Pope, the King, and the Mikado, with others too numerous to be named. Now you know whom I mean—our father Adam. I almost put a beautiful adjective before his name, but it would startle you too much. Later on we shall see. I know what you would answer if I asked you what you think about him. You would say: "He was a troublesome, greedy, inquisitive man, who brought to us all sorts of evils, both of soul and body." That is true, but it is not the whole truth. You forget the second part of his story. His sin was great, because his state of grace was so very great, but his sorrow—was it not great also? Father Faber says that his contrition was such that it required a miracle to keep him alive, and that his love for God afterwards was probably greater than before he had sinned. And what about his life of

penance ? We do not read of any Saint who did penance for one hundred years, and his lasted nine hundred ! Let us not forget to mention also the penance, of the same duration, of his beautiful, patient Eve ! She helped to bring death into the world by tempting him to sin, but she was the first to taste of its bitterness—a figure of the Mother of Sorrows at the foot of the Cross : she bent over the lifeless body of her beloved Abel, slain by his brother's hand ! And after all this, three thousand years in Limbo ! You remember the bad consequences of Adam's sin, but you forget all the good it brought to us ! If you followed carefully, year by year, the Offices of the Church, and thus acquired by degrees a little knowledge of Latin, you would know that the Church, in her Morning Office for Holy Saturday, exclaims, "*O felix culpa !*" (O happy fault !), by which we have obtained such a Redeemer, and all the merciful ordinances that came to us through His death. Now you will say with me, " Our good father Adam."

Remember, also, that the Saints of the Old Law had not the blessed helps that we enjoy. Think of Noah patiently building his ark during a hundred years, while every Hebrew word corresponding to our English " Old fool !" was hurled at him. Look at faithful Abraham, ready to sacrifice his only son when God had promised him descendants " numberless as the stars of heaven." He assisted at the sacrifice of Melchisedech, and

received his blessing ; but he was never privileged, as we are, day by day to take part in the great Sacrifice, offered by the true Melchisedech, Our Lord Jesus Christ, by the ministry of His priests. Consider the patience of Jacob, bearing "*the heat by day and the cold by night,*" while he tended for twenty years his uncle's flocks, and his mournful resignation over the loss of Joseph, whom he deemed dead ! Do not forget Moses. What had he not to endure for forty years from the rebellious Israelites in the desert, ever standing between them and the anger of Almighty God ; and, in the end, bearing the temporal punishment of one moment of unbelief, and dying, after seeing only in the distance, from the top of Mount Nebo, the Promised Land he had hoped to enter. I cannot find room for all—the deep contrition and penance of David ; the holy lives of the Prophets, many of whom were martyred by wicked kings ; the charity of Tobias, and his resignation in his infirmity ; the fidelity and piety of Daniel, who, a captive in Babylon, opened his window on the side towards Jerusalem, and prayed to the true God at the appointed hours in the midst of the infidels ; the constancy of the Machabees and their admirable mother in their awful suffering. Really, many people set aside too easily the Saints of the Old Testament. When they have learnt a little Bible history, and forgotten more than half of it, perhaps remembering that the Jewish was the true religion before the coming of Christ,

they have done with it, and think it of no consequence.

St. Cyprian of Carthage, a martyr of the third century, used to say that Catholic instruction should always begin by these words: "*In the beginning God created heaven and earth.*"

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

IV

Figures of Christ

My dear Children,

I am sure it has sometimes happened to all of you, when sitting in a room opening on to a veranda or a garden, where the sun is shining brightly, to raise your head at the sound of footsteps, and see and recognize the shadow of the coming friend before he has time to reach the door. In the same way the Messias, the promised Saviour, was foreshadowed in many persons who lived long before He came into the world. You must have learnt about these from your teachers; it would take several letters to explain them, so I will only name them to-day. They were Adam, Abel, Noah, Melchisedech, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Josue, Gideon, Samson, David, Solomon, and Jonas. But there were other figures that were not persons, and some of these I wish to explain. The Tree of Life, in the Garden of Eden, by eating of which men were to have been preserved from death if sin had not driven them from that happy abode; the manna, that food that fell daily from heaven to nourish the Israelites during their forty years' journey

through the desert ; the Paschal lamb eaten after it was sacrificed ; the bread brought to the prophet Elias by an angel, that alone supported him during his forty days' journey to Horeb, the Mount of God ; these were all figures of the Blessed Eucharist received in Holy Communion. The bread and wine offered in sacrifice by Melchisedech, and the Paschal lamb slain, were figures of Our Lord, offering Himself under the appearances of bread and wine, really slain on Mount Calvary, and mystically slain in the Holy Mass by the ministry of His priests. There were separate sacrifices in the Old Law for the four different ends for which the Mass is offered. There were bloody and unbloody sacrifices, and holocausts or whole-burnt offerings, in which the victim was entirely consumed—all of them acceptable to God as figures of the future Sacrifice of His Divine Son.

The one Tabernacle in the desert and the one Temple of Solomon were figures of the one true Church. The principal or most sacred parts were the same in the splendid oblong tent in the desert and in the Temple of Solomon, only in the latter they were much more magnificent, and not made to be carried about, as was necessary in the desert. In both there was the Holy of Holies, where was kept the Ark of the Covenant, in which were preserved, besides a vessel containing manna, the stone tables of the Commandments, and the rod of Aaron that had blossomed. Over the ark was a gold covering, called the mercy-

seat, from which God sometimes spoke, and at the sides golden cherubim, which God had ordered Moses to have made. Do not forget this. Remind Protestants of it when they tell you that God forbids us to make any images, separating what follows about adoring or serving them, which is idolatry. The Holy of Holies needed no lamp; it was illumined by a miraculous light proceeding from the mercy-seat, thus resembling Heaven, of which it is considered the figure, and of which it is said, in the Apocalypse, that it "*had no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof.*"

The outer room, or Holy Place, where the priest, whose week of service it was, offered incense every morning, contained the ever-burning altar of incense, the figure of the perpetual prayer of the Catholic Church; the table of shewbread, or loaves of proposition, twelve in number, changed every week and eaten by the priests, the figure of the ministry of the Catholic Church, founded on the twelve Apostles; the seven-branched golden candlestick, holding seven lamps perpetually burning, a figure of the Seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church. In the Outer Court, outside the Tabernacle, and also outside the Temple, was the Altar of Holocausts, on which victims were burnt; the brazen laver, a magnificent bowl, kept very bright, for cleansing the hands and feet of the priest before and during the sacrifice, a figure

of the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance. There was the Court of Israel, where the men assembled, and farther back from the altar the Court of the Women. The regulations concerning ceremonies were very minute and very strictly observed; and yet all this was but to reverence the figures of holy things of which we enjoy the realities. The Catechism of the Council of Trent, speaking of the presence of God among His people in the Holy Eucharist, bids us remember that we can never sufficiently admire the perfection and height of glory to which Our Lord has now raised His Church, "*which stands midway between the Jewish Synagogue and the Heavenly Jerusalem, and is but one step removed from the glory of Heaven.*" From all that I have told you in to-day's letter you should learn great reverence for the Church, in which Our Lord is truly present, and for everything relating to the Holy Eucharist.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z

V

Prayer-Book of the Holy Family

My dear Children,

To-day give me all your attention : I want to talk to you about the Prayer-Book of the Holy Family, the very same which Jesus, Mary, and Joseph used when they prayed in the holy house of Nazareth, and also when, in obedience to the order given by God to Moses, they went, three times a year, to celebrate the three principal Feasts in the Temple of Jerusalem. Perhaps some of you, remembering that Jesus is God the Son, are surprised to hear that He prayed. You forget that He is God the Son made man, that He has His Human as well as His Divine Nature, and that, as man, He prayed when on earth, and still intercedes—that is, prays—for us in Heaven. Now, you are curious to know when this holy book was found, and where. It has not been found, for it was never lost. Moreover, it was not new when Jesus, Mary, and Joseph used it ; it was already about one thousand years old. During that last thousand years of the Old Testament all holy persons had used it : David, Solomon before his fall, Elias, Eliseus, and the other

prophets; Tobias, in the Captivity of Nineveh; the valiant Judith in the camp of Holofernes; Jeremias by the smoking ruins of Jerusalem; Daniel and his companions in the Captivity of Babylon; Zorobabel, Esdras, Nehemias, with those they were leading back to rebuild Jerusalem; Esther, at the Court of the Persian Assuerus —all fed their piety on these holy prayers. In the New Testament, besides the Holy Family, Saints Joachim, Anne, Zachary, Elizabeth, John the Baptist, Our Lord's relations; his Apostles and disciples; Saints Lazarus, Martha, and Mary Magdalen, His friends, poured out their souls before God in the words of this book. Is it possible that you do not know it yet? Well, let me go on: the early Christians, in the Catacombs; the holy Solitaries, in the desert; the Fathers and Doctors of the Church; the Benedictines, Cistercians, Carthusians, Carmelites, Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits, and many other Orders and Congregations; religious of both sexes; all Popes, Bishops, priests, Tertiaries, of various Orders; and even (especially in the Middle Ages) devout people in the world, used it and never wearied of its beauty and its sweetness. I must tell you, after all: I mean the Psalter of David, the royal prophet, the man "*after God's own heart,*" who, it is generally believed, wrote most of the 150 psalms therein contained. Do not be afraid: I am not going to introduce you, neither to-day nor at any time, to all of them. I will speak

of a few, and gradually, in my letters, we shall meet with a few more. You remember, I suppose, that King David committed two grievous sins, and did not, until, about a year afterwards, God sent to him the Prophet Nathan to make him understand their gravity, seem to realize that he had done very wrong. You must recollect how his anger increased more and more against the cruel rich man of the prophet's story, till the moment when the latter said to him, "*Thou art the man.*" His eyes were opened, and his bitter sorrow, his sincere contrition, he expressed in the beautiful Penitential Psalms to be found in your Prayer-Books. Among these you will find the *De Profundis*, used in prayer for the dead, and the *Miserere*, for use in Lent and on other penitential occasions. I dare say you consider these the very last prayers you would use. You did not know all I have told you about them. Does the thought of the millions of holy souls, in the past and the present, using them, not invite you to join in their glorious company? To return to the Penitential Psalms: you have never committed, and I trust you never will, such grievous sins as those of King David; but do you not sometimes feel that there is something quite wrong in your soul? It is not comfortable at prayer, not at ease with Almighty God. Probably you have put off your Confession, and do not quite see your way back to a good Absolution. Take your Penitential Psalms; do not jabber them all over in a hurry:

better say two a day very carefully and slowly, before the Blessed Sacrament ; also going to Mass every day, if you possibly can. Go on doing these two things till you feel different. I am sure you will end by saying calmly and sincerely, "*I will arise and go to my Father*"; and very soon, your good Confession over, you will be joyfully preparing for a good Communion.

Surely those—and there are many—of all ages who read every day page after page of all sorts of prayers, never once using those that Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and all the holiest servants of God, for almost three thousand years, have loved to use, are picking up the pennies and leaving the gold sovereigns on the ground !

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

VI

Poetry in the Old Testament

My dear Children,

Many people are fond of poetry, and they often read a deal of rubbish, unworthy of the name. By poetry we do not mean rhyme ; there is plenty of rhyme without poetry, and plenty of poetry without rhyme. The former places before us hard facts, or explains abstruse truths, in a disguise of beautiful images and figures that give pleasure to the mind similar to that produced by the sight of a lovely picture ; the latter, by itself, merely consists in using a certain number of syllables in each line, ending in similar sounds, as required by the rules of versification. The Orientals or Asiatics always were, and still are, very fond of poetical or figurative language, and use it continually. The following beautiful extract is from the writings of Solomon. He was very young when he succeeded David, his father ; and, having pleased God by praying for wisdom, received from Him also riches and glory, so that there was never a King before nor since so wise, so rich, so glorious as Solomon. It is very sad, after all this, to have to speak of his fall, which

began by grievous disobedience to the Law of Moses, and ended in habitual acts of idolatry. One can easily understand that God was very angry with him, and sent a prophet to tell him that his kingdom would be divided, in punishment for these sins. Unfortunately, there have been sad falls, like that of Solomon, in every age of the Church: learned men, great preachers, famous missioners even, leave off leaning on God, neglect humble prayer, and in punishment lose their faith—the very worst loss for a soul, because without faith there is no way back to God, and a miracle of grace is required to convert them. We do not know with certainty that Solomon repented, but some of his latest writings give a little hope that he did. Take this as an example of his poetry:

"*Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the time of affliction come, and the years draw nigh, of which thou shalt say: They please me not.*

"*Before the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars be darkened, and the clouds return after the rain; when the keepers of the house* [the hands] *shall tremble, and the strong men* [the legs] *shall stagger, and the grinders* [the teeth] *shall be idle, and in a small number, and they that look through the holes* [the eyes] *shall be darkened: And they shall shut the doors in the street, and the grinder's voice shall be low, and they shall rise up at the voice of the bird* [wake at cock-crow], *and*

the daughters of music [the ears] *shall grow deaf. . . .*

"*And the almond-tree shall flourish* [the hair become white] . . . *because man shall go into the house of his eternity, and the mourners shall go round about in the street.*

"*Before the silver cord shall be broken, and the golden fillet shrink back, and the pitcher be crushed at the fountain, and the wheel be broken at the cistern* [four beautiful figures to express the destruction of life].

"*And the dust return unto its earth from whence it was, and the spirit return to God who gave it.*

"*Vanity of vanities,*" said Ecclesiastes, "*and all things are vanity.*"

Every part of the Old Testament is full of poetic language. Take away the poetry, and it will simply be, "Remember God before you are old and infirm, and die."

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

VII

The Modern Moloch

My dear Children,

I suppose you remember that, in punishment for the sins of Solomon, his kingdom was divided, his descendants having the tribes of Juda and Benjamin, and other Kings, who seldom held the crown in the same family for four generations, having the remaining ten tribes, that formed the kingdom of Israel. In the former kingdom, that of Juda, the crown went invariably, without even one exception, from father to son. In the kingdom of Israel not a single good King is to be found. Even the first chosen, Jeroboam, fearing that his subjects would desert him for his rival, if he obeyed God and allowed them to worship Him as commanded, in the Temple of Jerusalem, set up two golden calves, and caused his subjects to fall into the sin of idolatry. The Kings of Juda, lineal descendants of David and Solomon, were ancestors of the Messias, but not all of them were good. There were some excellent ones, some middling, some very bad. From the reign of one of the latter, the impious Achaz, I take my lesson to-day. Achaz plunged the kingdom deeper into

idolatry than Joatham, his father and predecessor. Instead of putting away false gods and repenting of his sins, turning in his troubles to the Lord God of David, his ancestor, and notwithstanding the continual reprimands of the great prophet Isaias, he insisted on making an alliance with the King of Assyria, which alliance proved his ruin. But it is not from these sins that I draw my lesson, but from one special act of monstrous idolatry, which is imitated in a spiritual sense by some Catholics of the present day. Have you never seen a picture of Moloch, the idol of the Ammonites, the brazen statue of a bear, which, sitting up on its hind-quarters in the midst of a raging fire, holds out its fore-paws to receive the tender infants, thrown by their barbarous parents, to be burnt alive in its honour? Achaz publicly offered his own son to be sacrificed to Moloch, whose altar and image had been set up in the valley, south of the temple of the Lord; and, says Holy Writ, "*he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.*" Now, you will exclaim that you are sure that there is no Moloch in this twentieth century, and no parents who throw their tender babes to be consumed by fire in his honour. I can easily prove to you what I have said. Godless education is the Moloch of the present day, and hell is the fire into which the children fall, whose parents, for the sake of this world's interests, place them in his arms. It is to save them from

this awful fate that our Mother, the Church, is always and everywhere fighting, as at present in England, for the education of her young children. Our precious Faith, the root of every spiritual blessing, the indispensable beginning of salvation, received in baptism, may be killed by starvation ; its life must be strengthened by proper food. It may also be killed by poison. When it is quite dead, it requires a greater miracle than is the raising of a dead body, to bring it to life again, and without it there is no way back to God, no means of reaching Heaven. Moloch in this life and hell in the next, a worse fate than that of the innocent Jewish babes, whose souls went to Limbo to await the opening of Heaven by the death and Ascension of Our Lord ! Oh, that people would only use the same measure for spiritual things that they use for temporal ones ! Where is the monster of a parent who would say, " I may as well kill my child ; God can raise it to life again "? Killing the soul by depriving it of a good Catholic education they do not mind at all. Some even say : " It will be all right ; he is a Catholic. He will practise his religion when he grows up." Our Lord has said, " *What a man sows, this also must he reap*," and also, " *Do men gather grapes on thorns, or figs on thistles ?*" You will not sow seeds of infidelity and impiety by leaving children in ignorance of their holy Faith, and reap a beautiful crop of Catholic virtues and practices. I remember a case in Europe, where

Catholic parents found themselves unavoidably compelled, while both were in foreign countries, to place a child for a short time with Protestants. This child was far from ignorant—indeed, was exceptionally well provided with solid Catholic instruction. Instantly the godfather was in a terrible state of anxiety, and an intimate friend also, who did what was possible in managing to take the child to Confession. Many are the parents who would say: "Much ado about nothing! So much fuss about a short time spent in the house of Protestant relations! I should not care to have pious busybodies interfering about my child!" "I dare say not, sir or madam, because your own faith is so weak, and so little educated itself, that you do not see the danger." There was an object-lesson on the subject in the same street, in the family of friends of these same non-Catholic relations, and much more anxious would the godfather have been if he had known of it. It was the case of a grown-up Catholic young lady, who, adopted by Protestants, had become an apostate. Have you never heard that, about a century ago, men were hanged in England for forgery, sheep-stealing, and shop-lifting? You acknowledge that it was so. Very well: are these crimes to be compared to that of spreading false doctrines, and by so doing killing the souls of many and sending them to hell? Perhaps Protestants will say that the doctrines were not false; to which I answer that,

in the eyes of Catholics, they were a virulent spiritual poison, and the crime of spreading them as much worse than murder as hell is worse than bodily death, which may open to the murdered one the gate of Heaven.

My dear children, those who receive a sound Catholic education must thank God and their good parents for the highest possible gift in their power to bestow. They may wander from the path of virtue for a time, but the Catholic seed sown in their minds and hearts has wonderful vitality, so that, if time be given them, it will put forth such strong shoots that the bad habits will shrivel up and wither, and, thanks to the truths of the Catholic Faith, they will return repentant to the holy practices of their childhood.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

VIII

Missa Cantata*—I

My dear Children,

You know we are all travellers : we do not know what is before us on our journey, nor how long it will last ; but those who have travelled a pretty long time know more about it than those just starting, and can give these last many a hint, and let them into many a secret, which will make the wayfaring easier and happier. I will try to do so for you. Our Holy Mother, the Catholic Church, has provided cool resting-places for us when we are weary ; songs and musicians to cheer us when we are sad ; and many another beautiful and consoling help to keep up our spirits on the road. Little by little I will explain them to you. Most of you are tolerably happy at present ; you have not much to bear ; but, as sure as I am writing to you, if you live a few years more you will have troubles to meet, and you will not be sorry that you have many a beautiful consolation to meet them with, because you will be, I

* In Port of Spain, as in England, there is (in the Cathedral) only a low Mass for children. But surely those in the second half of their teens are old enough to begin to assist at *sung* Mass, and thus gradually to acquire a knowledge and love of its beauty.

will not say learned, but less ignorant than many concerning the practices of our Holy Faith.

Another thing is this: I see a number of Catholics, for want of knowing better, wasting their time and their goodwill in picking up bright pennies (in the spiritual line) and leaving the gold sovereigns, two hundred and forty times more precious, unheeded on the ground. I am sorry for them, and must explain to them their mistake.

You see now that I am not writing for the little ones—I may do so some day—I am speaking to the children *in their teens*. Of all the consoling and beautiful resting-places for our weary souls, one of the best, the greatest (and we may, if we like, rest and refresh our souls in it every Sunday), is what you call High Mass, but which, strictly speaking, is *Missa Cantata*, or Sung Mass. Do not misunderstand me; I do not mean a Mass at which hymns, even Latin ones, are sung, nor a solemn High Mass, with deacon and subdeacon, too long for you now, but Mass as it is in the Cathedral on ordinary Sundays—one priest, but the Mass itself sung. I hope that is plain. I begin by a true story, giving it, as far as I can, in the words in which it was related to me. "In my young days—at least, from my twentieth to my twenty-fifth year—I had many troubles to contend with. Poverty pinned me down to wearisome and continual work, at that age very distasteful to me. At twenty-three I lost for ever, in a very sad way, a friend who had brightened

my life somewhat; I had other sorrows I cannot mention; and, worst of all, I approached the Sacraments seldom, because, on account of scruples, receiving them was torture to me. Only one spiritual consolation was open to me, and I cannot express to you what it was in my life, and how I felt the privation of it when anything compelled me to pass a fortnight without it. This one joy of mine was the Cathedral Sung Mass. It was an hour of Heaven, so to speak, in each week. I loved the words and the music of the preparatory *Asperges*, but, above all, apart from the essence of the Holy Sacrifice, which is the same in Low Mass, I enjoyed the *Preface* and the *Pater*. Whenever I had desponding thoughts the words and the music of the *Preface* for ordinary Sundays would dispel them." I presume that this Catholic had received something of what I wish to give you, to be able thus to appreciate the beauty with which our Holy Mother the Church has clothed the more solemn celebration of Holy Mass—of which I will speak to you in my next letter.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

IX

Missa Cantata—II

My dear Children,

I am pretty sure some of you have exclaimed, after reading my letter, "All very well for those who live near the Cathedral!" My dears, if any of you reside at Cocorite in these happy days of electric tramcars, you are at the door of the Cathedral, a pleasant drive thrown into the bargain, for *la niappe** (is that the way you spell it?). Do not talk of the expense, especially when I tell you that I do not expect you to go to Sung Mass every Sunday. A Saint was asked what was the best way to honour Our Lady. "*Minimum, sed constans*" (Little, but constant), was his answer. If you do not understand a Latin word now and then, ask your big brother. I wish you to resolve to go once a month, and when you have omitted to do so, to go twice the next month. What will that cost? You are pretty well up in arithmetic; you will have to save for this purpose four-fifteenths of a cent per day! Four shillings a year! You would manage to save ten times as

* A Creole word for something extra given gratis.

much to hire a bike, for an air-gun, the circus, a fine new feather, or a fashionable waistband. Go two or three together, and the drives will be more pleasant; I know you will leave the chat at the Cathedral door. Now you will say that you have no seat. If you were told that you could go to the circus without paying, that you would see empty seats, and no one would trouble you if you took one, you would make no bones about it. Do the same at the Cathedral, and if I hear that it is becoming quite full at Sung Mass, I shall be happy to conclude that my young friends are helping to fill it.

Put your rosary in your pocket, in case you cannot fill up otherwise than by saying it the time of the sung *Gloria* and *Credo ;* but, above all, take your Missal (cheap ones may be had), or, at least, a book with the complete Ordinary of the Mass, and the Epistles and Gospels. Be there in time for the *Asperges,* the sprinkling with holy water, intended to remind Christians of the purity of heart with which they should assist at the Sacred Mysteries. With this thought make an act of contrition. Follow the Mass in your book as well as you can. Whatever you do, say some decades of the rosary rather than pass such a holy time in examining the people round about you. What would the holy ones of the Old Law not have given to be in your place ! When God looks down on this earth of ours, He always sees a portion of it shining, as no diamonds ever shone,

with the brightness of Holy Mass. Pay the greatest attention to the sublime words and beautiful music of the *Preface*. Follow the *Canon* most attentively ; at the Memento of the Living pray for all those you ought to pray for. You know well when the first Consecration is near at hand. Five short words are said. Now myriads of Holy Angels fill the sanctuary ; it is the awful moment of sacrifice. You may represent to yourself Our Lord as "*the Lamb slain*," and offer Him for the four ends you have heard of in your Catechism—*infinite adoration, infinite thanksgiving, infinite satisfaction,* and *petition of infinite value*—to obtain for the living and the dead all possible blessings. After the Memento of the Dead, the priest says aloud the words, "*Nobis quoque peccatoribus*," and continues in a low voice praying that those present may have "part and fellowship" with the holy Apostles and martyrs, some of whom he names. Listen again carefully to the sung *Pater Noster*. Surely you know that in Latin ? The beautiful prayers before Communion, said by the priest, will prepare you to make, after an act of contrition, a spiritual Communion ; and with the priest's Communion the integral part of the Mass ends. Father Jerome Savonarola, a great Dominican, about whom I may speak to you some day, tells us, in his "Method of Following Mass," that, at the priest's last blessing, we should think of Our Lord's words at the last judgment, "*Come, ye*

blessed of My Father"—a beautiful thought to carry home. Hear Sung Mass in this way once a month, and you will not find it wearisome. You will have had also the benefit of a sermon.

I must add a few words about Mass on days that are not of obligation. Our Lord told St. Mechtildis that He would send to us, when we are dying, as many angels as we have heard Masses that are not of obligation. If you do not value this promise, it is because you are not well instructed about the Devil. Do you know that his name, Lucifer, means "light-bearer"? Highly intelligent persons do not become stupid when they lose God by mortal sin. Solomon, when telling us how he satisfied his passions in every way, adds, "*And my wisdom also remained with me.*" Lucifer still has his magnificent angelic intelligence, and makes use of it to deceive us, who are so stupid compared to him. How much need we have of devotion to the Holy Ghost and the Holy Angels, to defeat his tremendous cleverness!

Not long ago we went joyfully, in crowds, to welcome our good Governor.* I venture to say that there would have been denser crowds, if he had announced that he would shower gold pieces from his carriage all the way from the wharf to St. Ann's! Every morning there is a greater arrival. If you are awake at five, you may say

* Sir Henry Moore Jackson, G.C.M.G., a model ruler and an exemplary Catholic, who died in London soon after, and whose loss Trinidad will long deplore.

to yourselves, "Here again is Holy Mass! It has been all round the earth; it has enriched with grace millions of Catholics in every land; and now it is our turn: our Trinidad will shine now for a few hours in the eyes of God, and He will shower His gold pieces, His wonderful graces, on those who come to look for them at Holy Mass!" Thousands of well-instructed Catholics believe such great things in their minds without realizing them in their hearts. Those should be very grateful who do realize them before death —the longer the better.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

X

Carnival and Compline

My dear Children,

Your heads are already very full of the Carnival, and I am afraid by the time you receive this letter it will have driven out every other thought. So let us talk about it. Do you know that the word "carnival" is supposed to be a combination of two Latin words that mean *Flesh-meat, farewell*—Good-bye to meat? If the law of the Church concerning Lent were observed, not only without the immense dispensations granted long ago to Latin America, and therefore to Trinidad, as belonging to Spain, but without any dispensation at all, it would mean a complete abstinence from meat, even on Sundays, the weekdays being days of fasting also. The Carnival must have had its origin in comparatively modern times, for it does not exist in those countries which separated from the Church in the sixteenth century. You may have seen it called, as I have, in a Protestant vocabulary, "a festival to which Roman Catholics pay great attention." You are not so stupid as to believe that. It was, and is, supposed to be a time of unmitigated merriment

before entering on the penitential gravity of Lent. If it were nothing but an extra amount of innocent amusement, all well and good. Unfortunately, in the eyes of God and His angels, and even in the eyes of good Christians, there is a great deal more—a considerable amount of mortal sin. I am told that here it is not so bad as it used to be.

Let us turn to a better name for these last days before Lent, the name given to them in the old Saxon times of Catholic Merrie England—Shrove-tide, Shrove Monday, Shrove Tuesday. Do you know what these mean? They signify the time or days for going to Confession in preparation for Lent. Notice how the very words they commonly use condemn non-Catholics. To go to the Sacrament of Penance was "to go to be shriven," in the old Saxon English, and hence the word "Shrove."

The Blessed Sacrament is exposed at the Cathedral from High Mass on Sunday to the evening service on Shrove Tuesday. Do you know why? That Our Lord may receive extra loving adoration in reparation or atonement for the mortal sins committed on these and other days. I am sure you will not be of the number of those Catholics, unworthy of the name, who cannot give even half an hour on each of the three days to consoling the Sacred Heart of Jesus for so much iniquity. I advise you to make your adoration in the morning: you are not then tired, there is less noise, and it will give you the

grace to avoid anything wrong in your amusements.

What about the evening service, the beautiful, consoling office of Compline? Before speaking to you of it, I must impress upon you, once for all, that there is no sweetness, no consolation, no beauty even, in any of the lovely services provided by our Holy Mother the Church, for those who are in the state of mortal sin. Those who would enjoy them must first be in a state of grace. For those who are not there is Holy Mass, it is true, by assisting at which they may obtain the grace of a good Confession; but a taste for the beautiful things must come after that.

Do you know that there is a portion of the Divine Office, which all priests and thousands of religious are bound to say daily, for every third hour in the twenty-four except that after midnight? To-day I can only speak of the last of these, Compline, which, strictly speaking, should be sung at 9 p.m. It is one of the five shorter "Hours," and, if not the most beautiful, it is certainly the most comforting of them all. It was originally the night prayers composed by the great patriarch St. Benedict (who lived about 700 years before our own dear Holy Father, St. Dominic) for his monks. Monseigneur de Ségur tells us that "the Roman Church found this such a beautiful idea that she adopted it, and made it a general rule." *Pax* is the Benedictine motto, and Compline speaks

of *peace* throughout. In the beautiful blessing, at the very beginning, the priest asks of God to give us "*Noctem quietam, et finem perfectum.*" Can anything be imagined more peaceful than a quiet night and a perfect end—that is to say, a happy death, of which a quiet night is a figure? Again I say it (I wish to impress it so deeply upon you), there is neither quiet night nor perfect end to hope for without the state of grace. I cannot refrain from telling you a true story that comes to my mind: "In a country village in France a little boy, who made his First Communion in excellent dispositions, had made a firm resolution never to go to bed with a mortal sin on his conscience. For a long time he did not fall into a grievous fault; but at last, having, I suppose, begun by omitting his prayers, he committed an undoubtedly mortal sin. He remembered his resolution, and just before bedtime he begged his mother to allow him to go to Confession. She answered that it was too late, the night dark, the presbytery far off, and part of the road through a lonely wood; that he could go early next morning. Great was her anguish next day when she found her poor boy dead in his bed. She was not long without consolation. His Guardian Angel had seen the rapid progress of the fatal disease, hidden from all others, that would end his short life before next morning. That best of friends, whom we forget too much, did not let him sleep, and obtained for him the courage to brave everything

and cross the wood alone at midnight for the blessing of Absolution. There was the ill-temper of the priest's old housekeeper to encounter also; but the Curé did not send him away without the peace and pardon God's priest can bestow, and happy indeed he was to think he had absolved him, when he heard next morning of his sudden death. Sleep and death we are reminded of all through Compline. In the Old Testament it is often said of one who died, "*he slept with his fathers*"; in the Mass the dead are spoken of as those who "*sleep in the sleep of peace*"; and, on the other hand, does not Shakespeare call sleep "*that death of each day's life*"? If you never assist at Compline, you will not know its lovely music. You must try and acquire a Catholic taste for the beautiful plain chant of the Church. It is called *Gregorian*, from St. Gregory the Great, who composed much of it. He was the same who sent St. Augustine to convert the Old English (or Saxons). If you had been taken to Vespers and Compline from your earliest childhood, you would miss it, and long for it when you cannot get it. I have read lately a paragraph about "Gregorian chant in Heaven." That I do not find correct; it does not agree with the "*ear hath not heard*" in the text quoted in our Catechism. But Gregorian chant from Heaven is my belief; it is too unearthly to come from anywhere else.

Before you hear from me again Lent will begin.

It is right to practise, during each special season, some special devotion according to the spirit of that season. I am sure you will go to Mass as often as you can, and make the Way of the Cross in public or in private ; but every day, without exception (*Minimum, sed constans*, you know), could you not say attentively the *Miserere* before the Blessed Sacrament, not only for yourself, but also for those who have long omitted their Easter Communion ?

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XI

An Infant's Death

My dear Children,

The noisy wildness of the Carnival is over. You have recovered from the headaches and sunburns that you did not mind procuring for yourselves by your determination to miss nothing of it, and quiet and order have resumed their rule in our city.

You have also received the ashes, and heard the words of the priest to each one to whom he gives them: "Remember, man, thou art but dust, and unto dust thou shalt return." It is quite a fit time to take you with me to one, or, if time and space permit, to two funerals. I know there are some parents who do not allow their children to see a corpse or assist at a funeral. That is all very well for the very little ones. It would be all very well for the others also, if Almighty God had decreed that no one should die under the age of twenty; but He has not done so. As you may die before you grow up, it is quite necessary that you should sometimes think of death. Father Faber says in "The Creator and the Creature": "Keeping back the image of Hell, in the case of children, has often marred

a whole education." I think something like this may be said about keeping back from them all that reminds them of death. I grant that it is not pleasant, as a rule, to think of death; but those same parents compel their children to swallow very unpleasant medicine when it is necessary for their bodily health. Why not do the same for their souls? After all, is it not true of everyone who has reached the use of reason that nothing has been done till a good death is achieved? I have just met with a quotation from that great English Cardinal, Nicholas Wiseman, that puts in better words than mine what I was going to say. It is true also of the funeral services—even, to some extent, of that used at the burial of adults. This is what he says: "The Church Offices are always full of life and cheerfulness; she ever prays in hymns, making '*a joyful noise to God in psalms.*'" I will take you first to one of those funerals where there is not the least room for anything but joy, the burial of a baptized infant. I use the word "infant," because I mean one about whom there is not the least doubt of baptismal innocence. I know the Church gives what you call a "baby's funeral" to all children under seven years of age; but you must not fancy that children wake up on their seventh birthday, and come suddenly to the use of reason, which they had not when they fell asleep the night before. It is my conviction that intelligent children, especially those well instructed,

often come to the use of reason at a very tender age. I remember once, though very much grown up myself at the time, assisting at a retreat preached for children. The priest, speaking to them of sin, said: "How often fond mothers think and speak of their darlings as 'little angels,' while God and the holy angels can only see them as precocious sinners, on account of grievous sins on their young souls!" I say it happens to the well-instructed, because, for instance, pious parents and Catholic teachers having taught them their prayers, and explained to them that they are bound to say them morning and evening, they neglect to do so. They know it is wrong, and by this omission they open the gate of their soul to the devil. There is no grace of God to keep him out, and you know how wonderfully clever he is. He comes with a grievous temptation, and very soon there is a mortal sin on the soul. It is very sad, but, I am sure, in the case of some children, it is very true. Now, to something all joy—the burial of a baptized infant! I find that many, even among grown-up people, do not appreciate correctly the death of such a one. As to the elder ones, they say, "My brother [or sister] is now *a little angel*," and then they have done with him or her. There are three corrections to be given to these words of yours: (1) The adjective "little" can never in any sense be applied to angels: they have no bodies, therefore no physical dimensions, and as to them, as spirits,

the very lowest of God's angels is a creation of magnificent supernatural grandeur, of whom we can form no idea till we meet him in Heaven; (2) your little brother (or sister) never has been, is not now, and never will be, an angel: in Heaven he is a pure, glorious human soul, bright with baptismal grace, enjoying the beatific vision of God, incomparably more enlightened than the greatest theologian, or the Pope himself; (3) the word "little" can be applied to his body only as it is now, for it will not rise again inferior to the bodies of those who died a good death grown up. It is quite fitting and Catholic to place on this little body your loveliest flowers; it was the temple of the Holy Ghost, and will certainly enjoy one day the happiness of Heaven.

Longfellow, though not a Catholic poet, writes thus of a dead child:

> "Not as a child shall we again behold her;
> For when, with raptures wild,
> In our embraces we again enfold her,
> She will not be a child."

So, pray do not think of one of these as a small chubby head, flying about on scraps of wings, but as a beautiful (grown up in an instant) brother or sister, always praying for you and longing to meet you in the presence of God. No time, no space, to speak of the beautiful burial service. It will be for next week.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XII

Flowers and Funerals

My dear Children,

As I spoke of flowers on the little corpse, I think I may as well give you the remarks made recently by a friend of mine on the subject of flowers at funerals. He seems to have cogitated over it a good deal. This is, as near as possible, what he said: "The lavish and universal use of flowers at funerals seems to me to take away all their significance. Who would value the coveted K.C.M.G. after his name if he heard that our good-natured King, in a fit of benevolent imbecility, was bestowing them on blacksmiths and cabbies? It amounts to the same thing, in my appreciation, in regard to flowers: they are placed on the coffin of the innocent babe, whose happy soul is certainly in the presence of God, and on that of the hoary-headed sinner, who is saved, we hope, through one timely Absolution, '*yet so as by fire.*' They lie on those of saintly and venerable priests, and on that of the man who, while making his yearly Communion, has been chiefly remarkable for the worship of his cashbox. The coffins of holy nuns, taken to their reward in all

the freshness of their heroic sacrifice, sometimes are less adorned than those of women of the world, who gave a very small part of their lives to God. To look at the question from a more practical point of view, do you not really believe that your friend in Purgatory would prefer you to give your time, as soon as possible after his death, to a spiritual wreath, such as that of the Passion-flowers of the Way of the Cross, or Our Lady's garland of roses, the Holy Rosary, both so highly indulgenced for the dead ? And you might have one, two, or three Masses said. That is what your friend is longing for. Perhaps you will say that the flowers please the relations. It is true, but it is because they do not use the same measure for spiritual and temporal things. Suppose some day, during the painful last illness, you had brought heaps of decorations to make the patient's room look pretty, while he or she lay groaning in an agony of pain; would they not have sent you to Jericho with your pretty things, and welcomed with joy the friend that brought a new anæsthetic to soothe the pain ? Let them do the same for the dear departed soul."

I leave my friend's reflections to your judgment. Let us hasten to the joyful funeral. In the Prayer-Book before me it is said : " In token of their purity, innocent children have a crown of flowers and sweet herbs on their heads." After the psalms *Laudate pueri Dominum, Beati Immaculati, Laudate Dominum de Cœlis,* and

Domini est terra, and two beautiful prayers, comes the jubilant *Benedicite*, or *Canticle of the Three Children*, Daniel's companions in the Captivity of Babylon. If your Prayer-Book is that very best of small Prayer-Books, the "Garden of the Soul," you will find it there. It is very beautiful, and it is inspired by the Holy Ghost. Notice how, after the holy angels, they call on everything in nature, from things without life to animals, to man, to Israel, to priests, to souls of the just, to the holy and humble of heart, to bless the Lord with them and for them. You surely know the story of their wonderful preservation. Cast into the fiery furnace, heated seven times more than usual, because they would not adore King Nabuchodonosor's golden statue, while those who cast fuel into the flames are drawn in and consumed, they walk about free, with their protecting angel, feeling nought but a cool breeze. Nabuchodonosor, looking on, exclaims: "*Were not three men cast in bound? and I see four, walking about free, and the countenance of the fourth is like unto the Son of God.*" Indeed, there was great reason for a joyful canticle, as there is also at the burial of a happy innocent, saved quite gratuitously by the merits of Christ's "Precious Blood."

In the funeral of an adult, after the *De profundis* and the *Miserere*, the Church, in a beautiful responsory, calls upon the holy angels to receive

the soul and present it to God; and after the responsory, the *Libera me,* and a beautiful prayer for pardon, there is the consoling antiphon: "*May the angels conduct thee into Paradise! may the martyrs receive thee and lead thee into the holy city of Jerusalem! May the choir of angels receive thee, and mayst thou have eternal rest with Lazarus, who was formerly poor!*" Do you not recognize, even when you hear them in Latin, those beautiful words of Our Lord to Martha, before raising her brother to life: "*Ego sum resurrectio, et vita: qui credit in me, etiam si mortuus fuerit, vivet; et omnis, qui vivit, et credit in me, non morietur in æternum.*" Perhaps some of you do not know the *Benedictus,* or its history. It is the jubilant Canticle of St. Zachary when, after the birth of his holy son, St. John the Baptist, destined to be the precursor of our Saviour, he recovers his speech and exclaims: "*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; because He has visited and wrought the redemption of His people,*" *etc.* The tones of the antiphons and the *Benedictus* are also very beautiful.

For us there is no chance of an infant's funeral. Let us so live and so die that in the sight of God and the Court of Heaven our funeral also may be a joyful one! To obtain this greatest of graces, let us cling to Our Lady's Rosary. It is said that a life of "Hail Marys" can but lead to a happy death; but they are of no use if they are

jabbered in a parrot style, without attention. Then there is also this beautiful verse from her little Office :

"*Maria mater gratiæ,*
Mater misericordiæ,
Tu nos ab hoste protege,
Et hora mortis suscipe."

You can, you must, understand such simple Latin words.

Ever yours devotedly,
A. Z.

XIII

Joy in a Good Confession

My dear Children,

In Lent we have to prepare for the most necessary — nay, for adults an indispensable — Catholic practice. It is very fitting that it should be placed before your minds now. I mean the worthy reception of the Sacrament of Penance, or, as we say more commonly, a good Confession, the one plank after shipwreck, the laborious baptism—as necessary to almost all who have reached the use of reason as the Sacrament of Baptism is to infants. These latter, without Baptism, go to Limbo, while almost all adults, without Absolution, would go to much worse than Limbo—to hell for all eternity. I do not mean the Confession of those who have every week only venial sins to accuse themselves of, and who receive Absolution with renewed sorrow for grievous sins of their past life ; I mean Confession after one or more mortal sins. I am inclined to think that if Confession does not almost immediately follow the first mortal sin, it is almost impossible to stop at one ; and some people seem to think that, having lost God's grace, it

does not much matter whether their mortal sins are few or many. Very wise are those who have recourse as soon as possible to Our Lord's merciful remedy, and make and keep the resolution never to retire to rest at night in danger of waking up in hell on account of even one mortal sin.

The return to God, by a good Confession, is not in itself a pleasant thing. The object of my letter to-day is to show how it may be made easy, and even, by God's grace, happy and sweet. Kind mothers and motherly nurses have various clever ways of disguising for children the bitterness of very unpleasant medicines. Our Blessed Lord, Who so ardently desires to forgive us, and Who, to make us understand His love, has said that, *even if a mother should forget her child, He will not forget us,* has left us a most consoling parable, by the use of which He wishes us so to sweeten a difficult Confession as to find more joy than bitterness in it. You know I mean the story of the Prodigal Son. Let us together consider each part of it, and extract all the sweetness that our loving Saviour has hidden for us therein.

The poor foolish younger son, tired of the wise restraints of his father's house, fancies that he will find more happiness away from home in a far country, where he can satisfy his wild desires, and set at nought his father's will. He asks for his portion of the inheritance, and makes use of

it to carry out his foolish plans. Riotous living and bad companions soon exhaust his little fortune, and he finds himself reduced to a state of dire misery. Clothed in dirty rags, weak and ill from want of nourishment, trembling lest his father's officers of justice should find him out and cast him into gaol, he is compelled to accept the position of swineherd, and such is his state of hunger and destitution, that he envies the husks of swine (the pigs' food) that he sees before him. The recollection of the happy home he has left recurs continually to his mind. "*How many hired servants in my father's house,*" he says to himself, "*have bread in abundance, and I here perish with hunger!*" And at last, unable to bear his misery any longer, he adds: "*I will arise and go to my father, and say to him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee. I am not worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants.*"

Let us consider this first part of the parable. The spiritual misery of the sinner is exactly represented by that of the prodigal son. The pleasures of sin are soon over. The robe of sanctifying grace is gone; God and His angels and saints look down with aversion on the sight. The soul is famishing for want of the "bread of angels" it has despised; it trembles day and night at the thought that death may come suddenly, and cast it into hell for ever. You surely remember the story of the man who, while

fighting the mother eagle, cut almost quite through the rope that held him. His sad situation, hanging by a thread over the precipice, is exactly that of the sinner over the abyss of hell. The poor prodigal can endure it no longer. "*How many hired servants in my father's house*"—how many with much less education, much less Catholic instruction than I received, fewer graces than have been bestowed upon me, are fed frequently on the "children's bread" that angels covet—and I have nought before me but the *husks of swine*, that may satisfy beasts, but never content souls created to enjoy God! "*I will arise and go to my Father.*" I find in this short sentence three parts: *I will arise—and go—to my Father.*

With the help of the first and the second, I will assist you in your preparation for Confession; by explaining the third I hope to provide you with a sweetness that will hide what is, naturally speaking, bitter to us. First you must arise, and no longer sit gazing at the wretched husks of swine, the forbidden satisfactions you were tempted to taste; your soul must turn away from the desire to sin. After this you must start on the road home; you must begin to "go to your Father." Your body may take the tram to reach the church, but for your soul there is no tram. You must walk towards Him, putting down alternately the right foot of prayer and the left foot of duty. I am sure that, after the first mortal sin, to a great extent, if not entirely, you left off

saying your prayers. You cast your daily devotions from you ; you must pick them all up, however distasteful they may be. Offer them all up to obtain the grace of a good Confession, if you possibly can, saying your prayers at daily Mass, an infinitely powerful means of obtaining it. Perhaps you do not feel the courage to go straight to Our Blessed Lord, the Sun of Justice ; you dare not look at Him. Go, then, to the Blessed Virgin.

Do you not remember that sinners need not fear to gaze at her of whom the moon is an exact figure ? Say the words of the prayers, and ask her to offer them to her Divine Son with the dispositions of her own pure heart. Omit none of your former prayers ; all are needful. What about the left foot, your duty ? I am sure the work of your state of life was (as far as possible) omitted, and the remainder done very badly, as soon as you had fallen into grievous sin. It is hard to do it conscientiously without being in the state of grace, but you must try, and you must go on trying. With these two feet of prayer and duty you are going to your Father. Let us extract the sweetness from the last words, "*to my Father.*" He is the same loving Saviour Who has said that there is "*joy in Heaven on one sinner doing penance*"; the *Good Shepherd* Who "*leaves the ninety-nine sheep in the desert to go after the one that is lost,*" the sinner, and, having found it, calls His friends to rejoice with Him ; the same merciful Jesus

Who calls to Him all who are burdened, that He may relieve them. He is the loving Father of the prodigal son, Who, seeing him from afar off, runs to meet him, and, falling on his neck, kisses him. All this goodness on the part of his father must add to the prodigal's imperfect sorrow a beginning of love for the father who is so very good to him, and make it much easier to say : " *Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee.*"

I know what you are thinking now : that it would be all very sweet and easy if we had only to confess (as Protestants say they do) to Almighty God. I am ready for you, but I cannot say two things at once. I intended all the time to speak to you also of the other Father to whom we must confess our sins—the one to whom Our Lord has given the power to forgive us in His Name. We cannot say of our Catholic priest that he has, like Our Lord Jesus Christ, two natures, but we must understand that there are, so to speak, in our priest two sides—the sacred one, that throws the human one quite into the shade, when he exercises his priestly functions, especially when, as Christ's representative, he offers Holy Mass, or sits in the merciful tribunal of Penance, to cleanse our guilty souls in His Precious Blood. Then we must forget Father A., B., or C., who chats and jokes with us when we meet him. He is not there now. In his place is one who has for our soul the feelings of the father of the prodigal son ; who is so happy

to receive us after mortal sin; whose pleasure at our coming to Confession is the greater when our sin has been grievous; who longs to clothe us by Absolution in the *best robe* of sanctifying grace, and to invite us, by saying, "Go to Holy Communion," to the delicious banquet to which Our Lord welcomes more joyfully the penitent sinner than the "*ninety-nine just who need not penance.*"

Even in the consideration of the human side of our Father, the Catholic priest, there is much consolation for us. We have not to accuse ourselves to a pure spirit confirmed in grace, like the holy angels, but to a frail son of Adam, who, as well as we, has inherited the evil inclinations that come from original sin, and has to fight against them; who falls sometimes himself, and frequently has recourse to Holy Confession. Even the Father of all our Fathers, His Holiness the Pope, avails himself of the same means of grace. If for a few days you have been going towards your Father in the way I have shown you, at the last moment he will meet you, take you by the hand, and sustain you with sweetness and strength through the act of Confession. The words, "*I will arise and go to my Father,*" kept constantly in your mind, have certainly made it easier. Another way to help yourself on the road to Confession is to realize what you would feel if, in the state of mortal sin, you found yourself on an island where a priest might come only

two or three times a year. What an awful predicament! And yet there are Catholics whose faith is so weak that they live for years and die in sin within a stone's-throw from many Catholic priests. God grant to you and to me always to reside within reach of a Catholic Church and a Catholic priest!

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XIV

Indulgences

My dear Children,

I have read of a powerful King who has a very large family, and it is said that his children, besides being very numerous, are very various. His eldest son is simply perfect, his eldest daughter excellent; then there are many very good sons and daughters, who have amassed also considerable fortunes, and incurred hardly any debts; while the two first named have never got into debt at all. I am sorry to say that he has two other classes of children: some that reside in their father's house, and yet displease him by continual faults, and accumulate, by constantly adding on small items, a considerable amount of debt; and others who go away, often to a great distance, and grieve their father by very serious offences. Sometimes, however, they feel how miserable it is to live away from their good father, in disgrace, and in danger of being deservedly imprisoned by his orders; and they go back and ask for pardon, which he, when sure of their sincerity, always grants. However, he is very just, and, while allowing them to come home,

he tells them that, in one way or another, their debts must be paid, or else, after allowing them a certain time, the length of which he does not tell them, he will put them in gaol till they have satisfied his justice. Now, I must tell you that the perfect eldest son, the excellent daughter, who had no debts to pay, and the very good ones, who had a great deal of money left after paying their small debts, put their fortunes into a family treasury or bank, and appointed a trustworthy steward, giving him the care of it, and instructions as to the use he is to make of the money. He has been told that he may assist with some of it both the careless ones who remained at home and the criminal ones who have been forgiven. The eldest son has told this steward to impose certain easy duties on them, in consideration of which, each time they perform them, a portion of their debts shall be paid. In cases where their sorrow is very great the whole debt is sometimes cancelled.

I wish to show you, with the help of this little parable, the true nature of indulgences, and explain to you how the justice of God is always satisfied or paid, but with money that we did not earn, from the treasury of the Church, in which are gathered together the infinite satisfactions of the perfect Eldest Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the superabundant ones of Our Blessed Lady, the excellent daughter, and the saints. The steward is the Pope. You must notice that no

assistance is offered to those who are still away from home. Before you can gain the least indulgence you must leave off sinning, at least mortally, and return home and obtain your Father's forgiveness by a good Confession.

The first indulgences in the early ages of the Church were granted to those doing public penances for grievous sins, at the request of Christians on their road to martyrdom, who begged that, in consideration of their sufferings, these penances might be shortened. Surely you know that an indulgence of so many days or years does not mean that number of days or years taken off our Purgatory; it means the remission of as much Purgatory as would have been remitted by that number of days or years of public penance.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass has great satisfactory value. The most highly indulgenced devotions, all of them applicable to the souls in purgatory, are the Way of the Cross, the Holy Rosary, and the six *Paters* and *Aves*, in honour of the Holy Trinity and the Immaculate Conception, by which those who have validly received and faithfully wear the blue scapular of the Immaculate Conception can gain, as many times a day as they choose, " all the indulgences, plenary and partial, of visits to the basilicas and sanctuaries of Rome, of the Holy Places at Jerusalem, of St. James of Compostella (in Spain), and of the Portiuncula." They include many

plenary indulgences. This is one of the rare cases of plenary indulgences without Confession and Communion. The state of grace, you know, is always required for the least indulgence.

In the Life of Brother Raphaël Meysson, a Dominican novice who died about twenty-five years ago, I have read that he was so anxious to help the souls in Purgatory that he said these prayers every time he had a leisure moment, making sometimes a sort of rosary of them by offering them in honour of each mystery. The Blessed Curé d'Ars used to say that Catholics walk over indulgences with as little concern as reapers do over the stray ears of corn that fall.

A lay-brother once appeared, the very day of his death, to a Father in his monastery, telling him that he was then going to Heaven. The latter, astonished, exclaimed: "But I did not see in you any extraordinary holiness!" To which the brother replied: "I was continually gaining indulgences." Let us imitate the wisdom of this good brother, and try to be always gaining indulgences, not only for our own sake, but also for the sake of the holy souls in Purgatory.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XV

The Price of Our Privileges

My dear Children,

I believe that those for whom I write are comfortably housed, well fed, suitably clad, enjoying that greatest of all blessings, a good Catholic education ; that they have friends who are very kind, servants who attend to their wants, happy, merry holidays now and then, interesting books to divert them, and many more good and pleasant things provided for them by their devoted parents. I am afraid it is true that, as a rule, they are not very grateful. It is not that they are bad, hard-hearted children, but that they do not understand nor realize all the sacrifices, labours, and sufferings by which these advantages have been procured for them by their good parents. I knew long ago an old lady, who used to say that children have no correct idea of their parents' love till they are parents themselves. I think she was right. I dare say you are expecting me to instruct you on your duties to your parents. You are mistaken. That is part of your Catechism, and not the subject of my letters ; I leave it to your teachers. We, as

Catholics, are really the spoiled children of Almighty God. Every human being is His child, every single pagan, Mohammedan, infidel, Jew, or heretic receives from his Heavenly Father more or less grace—always sufficient to save his soul if he makes full use of it; but we Catholics (those in a state of grace, at least, for those in mortal sin are, like the prodigal son, by their own fault far from home, and are deprived of what those enjoy who, at least for the present, stay near their Father) have graces and privileges so great and in such abundance as, if possible, to make the angels jealous. We are sheltered in the magnificent dwelling-place of God's One, True, Catholic Church from the awful storms outside, to which others are exposed. Our delicious and life-giving food (and it may be our daily food if we choose) is no other than that of which Jesus Christ spoke when He said: "*I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst*" (St. John vi. 35). We are clad in the magnificent robe of sanctifying grace, in which we were clothed by Baptism—stained, more or less, it is true, but it is our own fault if we do not avail ourselves of the means, always at hand, for cleansing it.

We have God for our most kind Father, and Our Blessed Lady, the Mother of God the Son, for our dear indulgent Mother. Our powerful, rich, benevolent friends cannot be counted: they are the saints above. God's wonderfully powerful

and inconceivably intelligent servants and messengers, the holy angels, are always ready to serve us, one of them being assigned to each of us, always near us, always busy about our interests alone. There are the happy, merry feast-days of Holy Church, Catholic holidays for our souls, in every month of the year. And when we want Catholic diversion, have we not the lives of our glorious friends, the Saints, to pass pleasant hours with? Now let me tell you how these enormous blessings and privileges were procured or purchased for us, the spoiled children of God, by the terrible sufferings and bitter death of our Saviour Jesus Christ. I have not mentioned the Holy Mass, repeated thousands of times in every twenty-four hours, and the six other Sacraments for various wants of our souls. Every one of these, as well as smaller blessings, were bought for us by the awful Passion of our Redeemer.

When the priest raises his consecrated hand to give us Absolution, it is as if the Precious Blood of Christ trickled from his holy fingers on to our guilty souls, to cleanse them from sin and make them bright and beautiful in God's sight. Do we realize this when we enjoy these infinite blessings? You will receive this letter for Passion Sunday, the day on which in every Catholic Church all the statues are veiled in purple, as a sign of mourning, and to remind us that all our devotion must now be centred in the sorrowful Passion of our Saviour. It is the first day of

the week during which we must make very serious preparation for the " Holy Week " which follows, also called the " Great Week," on account of the great mysteries of our salvation which took place therein.

Many do not seem to know that Jesus Christ, being God as well as Man, at the time of His sufferings and death (indeed, at all times, because for God there is neither past nor future : all is always present), saw distinctly in His Divine mind every human being, from Adam to the very last, and every sin, mortal and venial, of each of us, and offered to His Heavenly Father, separately and individually for each of us, the merits of His sufferings and death. Another truth not sufficiently known is this : in the same way that anyone who has taken great trouble, and spent much money, in the cultivation of a garden or plantation, desires ardently to see his outlay come back to him in abundance of flowers or fruits, Our Lord wishes, above all things, that the shedding of His blood for us should bear abundant blessings. Every Mass that is said, every Sacrament validly given and worthily received, every prayer, each good work, each temptation resisted, each soul brought into the true Church, is another fruit of His Passion, another joy to His Sacred Heart. Those who just do the least possible to escape Hell have not understood this. The Saints, who spent their whole lives in labouring to save souls, understood it very well. I am sorry to

say that not all who understand practise what they know; if they did, Saints would be more numerous. Let us do our little best. Try to go to Mass every day till Easter; there is nothing like going to Mass. Perhaps you will feel the blessing from it, and be enticed to do the same during the great Easter Octave. Make the Way of the Cross as often as you can.

Do not forget that the Friday after Passion Sunday is the Feast of the Dolours of Our Lady. Honour her sorrows by going to Communion, if you can, and say the beautiful hymn, "*Stabat Mater Dolorosa*." St. Ignatius Loyola said of the Blessed Virgin that "her grief at the sight of her only Son crucified was less than that caused by seeing anyone offend Him by sin." If we invoke her for a happy death, let us remember these words of St. Alphonsus Liguori: "From the day when Mary had at once the grief and the consolation of assisting at the last hour of her Son, the chief of the predestined, she has obtained the privilege of assisting, in like manner, all the predestined in that terrible passage."

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XVI

Ceremonies of Holy Week

My dear Children,

Whether you assist at the services during Holy Week in the Cathedral or not, I must try to give you a short explanation of each of them. It is shameful for so many Catholics to be ignorant on this subject.

I presume that you know all about Our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, riding on an ass, on the first day of that week, and the joyful procession of people that accompanied Him, holding palms in their hands and crying out: "*Hosanna to the Son of David! blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!*" Five days later they were to cry out, "*Crucify Him, crucify Him,*" as those do now who, a few days after their Holy Communion, return to grievous sin. And when He drew near, seeing in His Divine mind the awful chastisement they would undergo at the hands of the Romans, He wept over the city, saying: "*If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace.*" Palms are blessed and carried in procession, and on re-entering the church the cantors inside

shut the door, while the hymn is sung, in alternate parts, by those outside and those within, after which the cross-bearer knocks with the cross, and the door is reopened, to remind us that we can only gain admittance to Heaven and to the heavenly mysteries that lead us thither through the Cross of Christ. On Wednesday evening the Office of Tenebræ, which is called in your book " Matins and Lauds for Maundy Thursday," is sung for the first of three times. It is the midnight portion of the Divine Office, and naturally it is at a time when it is *dark*. In the early ages of the Church, when Christians were in the habit of watching in prayer during many special nights each year, they assisted at Tenebræ sung at its proper hour. There is the beautiful chanting of the Lessons of Matins, some of which are called in Holy Week the Lamentations. You will see a triangular candlestick, on which are fifteen lighted candles. In Europe only the one at the top, which represents Our Lord, would be white, the others are of yellow wax. The latter are one by one extinguished during the Office to remind us of the gradual running away of the Apostles and disciples at the time of the Passion. Towards the end the white candle is hidden for a short time behind the altar, to represent our Saviour's burial.

I must explain to you the way in which the gospel of the Passion is sung by three priests at the Cathedral on Palm Sunday and Good Friday.

One of them sings in a beautiful plaintive tone, only the words of Our Blessed Lord; another the words of the populace, and of anyone else who speaks; and the third the narrative, that is, the story.

I advise you not to go on Maundy Thursday to the Cathedral for Communion. You would receive it out of Mass—and to lose Mass is a great loss at any time, but particularly on the anniversary of the first celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The Cathedral Mass, with the blessing of the Holy Oils, is too long for you. The Blessing of the Holy Oils is only to be found in one edition of the Holy Week Books,* but you can procure it separately at the Catholic Truth Agency. Surely you understand *why* the Blessed Sacrament is placed on a much-adorned separate altar, while the high-altar, in token of mourning, is stripped and left quite bare! It is that special adoration and thanksgiving may be given to our Saviour, in the Blessed Eucharist, on this day of its institution, without interfering with the mournful commemoration of His sufferings.

In the afternoon the washing of the feet is to remind us of Our Lord's washing His disciples' feet before giving them Holy Communion. Do not forget that He ate with them the Paschal Lamb, a figure of Himself sacrificed on the Cross and in the Mass and received in Holy Communion. This was the last time that the rite of

* Published by R. and T. Washbourne.

the Paschal Lamb was pleasing to God. When the reality had come into existence, the figure should have ceased.

On the morning of Good Friday, follow the service carefully in your Holy Week Book. Notice that after the prayer " for the perfidious Jews " no genuflection is made, because they bent the knee in derision during Christ's Passion.

The " Mass of the Presanctified," as it is called, is really not a Mass, for there is no Consecration. The priest alone receives in Communion the Host which had been kept on the Altar of Repose from the Mass on Thursday.

During this Holy Week, and, indeed, whenever you think of Our Blessed Lord's Passion and Death, especially on Good Friday, when, at the " Adoration of the Cross," you go up to kiss the feet of the crucifix, bear in mind these words of the great Apostle St. Paul: " He loved *me*, and delivered Himself for *me*."

The long office of Holy Saturday morning is very beautiful. The new fire is first blessed, after having been kindled from a flint; a beautiful Preface is sung, where the words " *O felix culpa* " occur, and in which, over and over again, reference is made to " *this blessed night*," because the Resurrection took place in the night, and this service was formerly celebrated at midnight, as is still the first Mass of the Nativity. The Paschal candle, to represent Our Lord risen bright and glorious, is now blessed, the five

grains of incense fixed in it representing His five sacred wounds. The Prophecies are portions of the Old Testament, the first being from Genesis, the First Book of Moses, which is the history of the Creation. Then comes the blessing of the Baptismal Font, and another beautiful Preface, followed by the Litany of the Saints. The Mass is short and altogether joyful, the bells, which had been silent from the *Gloria* of Maundy Thursday, being again rung at that part of the Mass. There is the frequent repetition of the joyful *Alleluia*, and very short and jubilant *Vespers* at the end of Mass. It seems as if the Church can bear the sorrow no longer, and is compelled to anticipate the triumph of the Resurrection.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XVII

Easter

My dear Children,

It is a sad thing that many Catholics know no more of the New Testament than what they meet with in the Sunday Epistles and Gospels. They should at least be familiar with the history and words of Our Lord Jesus Christ, as related by the four Evangelists under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. These persons are certainly ignorant of several of the apparitions of Our Saviour after His Resurrection, and I think it best to relate them to you in the Gospel words. I do not copy for you the Gospel of this great feast, you have it surely in your Missal or Prayer-Book. Perhaps you do not know that, according to the Jewish way of reckoning time, the Sabbath ended with sunset, and that the first day of the week then began.

"In the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and, coming, rolled back

the stone and sat upon it, and his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And for fear of him the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men."* And "behold some of the guards came into the city and told the chief priests all things that had been done. And they being assembled, together with the ancients, having taken counsel, gave a great sum of money to the soldiers, saying: Say you that His disciples came by night and stole Him away, *when we were asleep*. And if the Governor shall hear of this, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they, taking the money, did as they were taught, and this word was spread abroad among the Jews, even unto this day."† Notice, my dear children, that the witnesses of the stealing away of the body were *sleeping witnesses*. St. Augustine, with regard to this fact, exclaims: "Dost thou produce *sleeping witnesses?* Certainly *thou thyself sleepest!*" What would the judge and everyone else say of a witness who declared that he was certain the crime was committed, *because he was asleep when it took place?*

Now that we have answered the enemies of Jesus, let us see what the Evangelists relate about His friends. "And on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene cometh in the morning, it being yet dark, to the sepulchre; and she saw the stone taken away from the sepulchre."‡

* St. Matt. xxviii. 1-4. † St. Matt. xxviii. 11-15.
‡ St. John xx. 1.

Also "on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they" (the other holy women) "came to the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled back from the sepulchre. And going in, they found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, while they were astonished in mind at this, behold, two men stood by them, in shining apparel. And as they were afraid, and bowed down their countenance towards the ground, they said to them: Why seek you the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how He spoke unto you, when He was yet in Galilee, saying: The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered His words."*

"And on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene cometh in the morning, it being yet dark, to the sepulchre; and she saw the stone taken away from the sepulchre. She ran therefore and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith to them: They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him. Peter therefore went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the sepulchre. And they both did run together: and that other disciple" (the beloved St. John) "outran Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And when he stooped

* St. Luke xxiv. 1-8.

down, he saw the linen cloths lying; but yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen cloths lying. And the napkin that had been about His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, wrapped up in one place. Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulchre; and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away again to their home. But Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping. Whilst she was then weeping, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre. And she saw two angels in white, sitting one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her: Woman, why weepest thou? She saith to them: Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. When she had said these words she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing; and she knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her: Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, thinking that it was the gardener, saith to Him: Sir, if thou hast taken Him away, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith to her: Mary. She, turning, saith to Him: Rabboni (that is to say, Master). Jesus saith to her: Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father, but go to My

brethren, and say to them, I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and your God. Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples: I have seen the Lord, and these things He said to me."* "And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they say one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back; for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man, sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe: and they were astonished. Who saith to them: Be not affrighted; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; He is risen, He is not here, behold the place where they laid him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see Him, as He told you. But they, going out, fled from the sepulchre. For a trembling and fear had seized them: and they said nothing to any man; for they were afraid."† "And while they were running to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying: All hail! But they came up and took hold of His feet and adored Him. Then Jesus said to them: Fear not. Go, tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, there they shall see Me."‡

I have told you about only two of Our Lord's

* St. John xx. 1-18. † St. Mark xvi. 2-8.
‡ St. Matt. xxviii. 8-10.

apparitions. In order not to exceed the usual limits of my letter, I must put off the rest until next Sunday. I hope you will make this holy octave (or week) not only a happy and merry one, but also a holy one, by going to daily Mass and avoiding sin. Our Lord rose to die no more, and Catholics often allow their souls to die again quickly by mortal sin, after their Confession and Communion.

I find I have forgotten to tell you that it is the constant belief and tradition of the Church that the first of our Saviour's visits was to His Holy Mother. It is not mentioned in the Gospel, but how can anyone think for an instant that He would do less for her, after her bitter anguish in His sufferings and death, than a very ordinary son would certainly do for his mother.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XVIII

Apparitions of Our Lord—I

My dear Children,

This is called Low Sunday, because the Feast of Easter Sunday is the *highest* of all. It is also called "*Quasi modo*," from the first word of the introit, and "*Dominica in albis*," or "*Sunday in white*," because, in the early ages of the Church, when public baptism was administered on Holy Saturday, this was the last day on which the newly baptized wore the white garment they then received.

I was for a moment tempted to omit copying here to-day's Gospel, as you have it in your books, but my account of Our Lord's principal apparitions would be incomplete without it, so I give it with the rest.

"Now when it was late that same day, being the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. And, when He had said this, He shewed them His hands and His side. The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord. And He said to them

again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this He breathed on them; and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.

"Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Unless I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe. And after eight days, His disciples were again within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then He saith to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side; and be not incredulous but faithful. Thomas answered, and said to Him: My Lord and my God. Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed. Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, you may have life in His name."*

* St. John xx. 19-31.

I want to explain to you that Our Lord's entering the room, " the doors being shut," was not a miracle, as it was assuredly a very great one when St. Raymond of Pennafort, O.P., after crossing miraculously three hundred miles of sea, kneeling on his cappa, entered in the night the Dominican convent at Barcelona, every door being shut. Do you not remember, from your " Explanatory Catechism," that by " subtilty," one of the qualities of glorified or spiritualized bodies, they can " overcome all obstacles " ; or, rather, for them there exist no obstacles. You know that the bodies of the just, when they rise at the Last Day, will have this and other great qualities. In Heaven at present, as far as we know, there are only two glorified bodies : that of Our Lord, Who rose by His own Divine power ; and that of His Blessed Mother, whose pure body was raised to life, and assumed into Heaven by the power of her Divine Son. You will see below that in one of His apparitions our Saviour ate with His disciples. This was a miracle, for it is not natural for a glorified body to eat, and it is natural for a glorified body to pass through shut doors.

St. Luke says : " Jesus stood in the midst of them [the disciples], and saith to them : Peace be to you ; it is I, fear not. But they, being troubled and affrighted, supposed that they saw a spirit. And He said to them : Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts ? See My hands and My feet,

that it is I Myself; feel and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see Me to have. And when He had said this He showed them His hands and His feet. But while yet they believed not, and wondered for joy, He said: Have you here anything to eat? And they offered Him a piece of a broiled fish and a honeycomb. And when He had eaten before them, taking the remains, He gave to them. And He said to them: These are the words which I spoke to you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. And He said to them: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day." *

On another occasion "when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said to Him: Lord,

[1] St. Luke xxiv. 36-46.

Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him: Feed My sheep. Amen, amen, I say to thee, when thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst, but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. And this He said signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when He had said this, He saith to him: Follow Me. Peter, turning about, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also leaned on His breast at supper and said: Lord, who is he that shall betray Thee? Him therefore, when Peter had seen, he saith to Jesus: Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith to him: So I will have him remain till I come; what is it to thee? follow thou Me."*

Again, on the mountain in Galilee, "Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: All power is given to Me in Heaven and in earth. Go, ye therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."†

In Jerusalem, too, "He appeared to the eleven as they were at table, and upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because

* St. John xxi. 15-22. ‡ St. Matt. xxviii. 18-20.

they did not believe them who had seen Him after He was risen again."*

I have copied for you these lengthy passages from the New Testament, not from one, but from all the Evangelists, as they do not all relate the same events.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

* St. Mark xvi. 14.

XIX

Apparitions of Our Lord—II

My dear Children,

I must explain to you that there is no doubt that there were many more apparitions of Our Lord that the Evangelists do not mention. It was after His resurrection that He explained to His Apostles many things (especially concerning the administration of the Sacraments), which form part of the *tradition* of the Church.

This most interesting apparition took place in the evening of Easter Sunday, but, for want of space, I was obliged to put off giving it to you.

"And behold, two of them went, the same day, to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they talked and reasoned with one another, Jesus Himself also drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were held, that they should not know Him. And He said to them: What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad? And the one, whose name was Cleophas, answering, said to Him:

Art Thou alone a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast Thou not known the things that have been done there in these days? And He said to them, What things? And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, Who was a Prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people; and how our chief priests and rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we hoped that it was He who should have redeemed Israel: and now, besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also, of our company, affrighted us, who, before it was light, were at the sepulchre, and not finding His body, came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that He is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre, and found it so as the women had said, but Him they found not. Then He said to them: O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all the things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory? And beginning from Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the things that were concerning Him. And they drew nigh to the town, whither they were going; and He made as though He would go farther. But they constrained Him, saying: Stay with us, because it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. And He went in with them. And it came to pass, whilst He was at

table with them, He took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to the other: Was not our heart burning within us whilst He was speaking in the way and opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour and they went back to Jerusalem: and they found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them, saying: The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how they knew Him *in the breaking of bread.*"*

I cannot refrain from saying a few words about this, one of the most beautiful and consoling of Our Lord's apparitions. Surely it is repeated in the lives of most Catholics. They have the good will to serve God, doing their best to find Him, in every circumstance of their life. He is certainly with them by His grace, and they know it not. Anxious and worried, sad and dejected, they go to Holy Communion, and the clouds are lifted, there is brightness again for them, and like the disciples at Emmaus, *they know the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread.* I must be forgiven for quoting for you a small portion from a poem on these words, "*Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent,*" from the pen of one who, we trust, belonged to the soul

* St. Luke xxiv. 13-35.

of the Catholic Church, though he died without visibly belonging to her—I mean, of course, John Keble :

"In darkness and in weariness
The traveller on his way must press,
No gleam to watch on tree or tower,
Whiling away the lonesome hour.

"Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near ;
Oh, may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes !

. . . . . .

"When the soft dews of kindly sleep
My wearied eyelids gently steep,
Be my last thought, how sweet to rest
For ever on my Saviour's breast.

"Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without Thee I cannot live ;
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without Thee I dare not die."

Ever yours devotedly,
A. Z.

XX

Madonna Mia

My dear Children,

I cannot let the month of May pass by without at least one letter about the Blessed Virgin. It will be a pleasure to me to write it, and I hope it will be a pleasure to you to read it. If I were to quote for you all the beautiful passages from the writings of Solomon which Holy Church, in the Missal and Breviary, applies to her, and the innumerable beautiful things that the Saints have written about her, they would more than fill up a whole year with weekly letters. To-day I have other things to say, and must put off till later in the year the little I shall have room for in that line.

The mere thought of Our Blessed Lady is like the recollection of a calm, cool, silvery, moonlight night.

I must first explain to you how devotion to the Holy Mother of God, like many other excellent things, is often extremely misunderstood and misused. Many persons imagine that they are practising it, when they are really offending God by a sin against the Holy Ghost—the grievous sin

of presumption. Having read stories of the almost miraculous conversion of great sinners just before death through the intervention of Our Lady, they make up their minds to sin as much as they like, practising each day some devotion in her honour by which they are quite sure they will reach Heaven all the same. They seem to think that she will, in a way, make herself the promoter of what grievously offends Almighty God and Jesus Christ, her Divine Son. I can assure such persons that they are on the highroad to hell. It is true that she has converted sinners in their last moments, but not those presumptuous ones who had made up their minds to live in sin and to die in grace by her aid.

Almighty God has often very severely punished the sin of presumption. Have you never heard of the figure on a crucifix that miraculously detached its hands, and put its fingers in its ears, when one guilty of presumption and obstinacy in sin cried out for mercy at the last moment? I think it was in England that took place the dreadful death of a rich Catholic, who, without abandoning his sins, always kept a priest in the house, to be sure of Absolution just before death. When his life was despaired of, and a servant was sent to the priest's room to call him, God made the priest invisible to the servant and unconscious of being called. No sooner had death taken place than he was found saying his Office

in his room, which he solemnly declared he had never left. "*Be not deceived, God is not mocked.*" The Holy Ghost has said, "*Cursed is the man that sins in hope*"—that is, with presumption.

Now let us see in what real devotion to Our Lady consists. The great Pope, St. Gregory VII., wrote thus to the Princess Matilda: "Put an end to the will to sin, and thou shalt find Mary more ready to love thee than any earthly mother"; and Pope Innocent III. said: "Let him who is in the night of sin cast his eyes on the moon and implore Mary." You see that both these Popes tell us that there must be the will to leave off sinning before we can hope to be assisted by her. We must do all that lies in our power to serve God, and practise devotions in her honour, that she may obtain for us the special graces by which we shall be enabled to do the more difficult things. Nothing is more pleasing to her than the Holy Rosary said attentively and with thought upon each mystery. There are many excellent penny books to help the meditation. You can get "The Rosary and How to Say It" at the Catholic Truth Agency.

Read carefully these beautiful words from the great St. Bernard: "Turn not thine eyes from this star, if thou wouldst not be overwhelmed by storms. If there arise any winds of temptation, look up to the star; invoke Mary. By following her thou canst not lose thy way; by imploring her thou canst not despair; by thinking of her

thou canst not wander; when she upholds thee thou canst not fall; when she protects thee thou canst not fear; when she guides thee thou canst not weary; when she is favourable thou wilt attain thy end; and so thou wilt experience in thyself how justly it was said, 'And the Virgin's name was Mary.'"

This is what St. Ambrose says of her: "She was, not in body only, but in mind, a virgin, humble in heart, grave in speech, wise in understanding, slow to speak, much addicted to reading, assiduous at her work, modest in her language, accustomed to look up to God, and not to man, as the Judge of her thoughts. There was no severity in her looks, no boldness in her speech, no indecorum in her conduct. Such, in short, was Mary, whose life alone is a course of instruction to everyone. . . . Let her example be copied by all who wish to attain to her reward."

These lines from Longfellow's version of Dante's "Paradiso" are very beautiful:

"Thou Virgin-Mother, daughter of thy Son,
Humble and high beyond all other creature,
The limit fixed of the eternal counsel!
Thou art the one who such nobility
To human nature gave, that its Creator
Did not disdain to make Himself its creature!
In thee compassion is, in thee is pity,
In thee magnificence; in thee unites
Whate'er of goodness is in any creature."

Beautiful, also, are these verses, written as far back as 1844 by the Anglican clergyman,

Keble, to whom reference was made last week:

"Ave Maria! Blessed Maid!
Lily of Eden's fragrant shade,
Who can express the love
That nurtured thee so pure and sweet,
Making thy heart a shelter meet
For Jesus' holy Dove?

"Ave Maria! Mother blest,
To whom, caressing and caress'd,
Clings the Eternal Child;
Favoured beyond Archangels' dream,
When first on thee with tenderest gleam
Thy new-born Saviour smiled.

"Ave Maria! thou whose name
All but adoring love may claim,
Yet may we reach thy shrine;
For He, thy *Son* and *Saviour*, vows
To crown all lowly lofty brows
With love and joy like thine."

I hope you are all offering some extra prayer to Our Lady during this month, and the same one every day. You know our good old rule, given to us by St. John Berchmans, "*Minimum, sed constans.*"

Yours devotedly,
A. Z.

XXI

Prayer—Rogations

My dear Children,

The three days preceding Ascension Day are called "Rogation days," the name being derived from a Latin verb that means to beseech or pray. You will notice that in the gospel of this Sunday Our Lord gives us an instruction, as plain as it is beautiful, on prayer. "*Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.*" Can anything be more consoling? How delighted you would be if Mr. Carnegie sent you a short note to that effect! Well, Mr. Carnegie is a mere insect in comparison to Him Who says this to each one of us; it is the all-rich, all-powerful, all-loving Son of God, Jesus Christ our Saviour. You will say to me: "Sometimes my prayers are not heard." To that there may be two answers, in the shape of two questions: first, were you in a state of grace when you prayed? for those in a state of sin must make only one request, the begging God, by the Holy Mass, and Our Lady's prayers, to bring them to make a good Confession; second, were your prayers good ones? had they

the necessary qualities of attention, humility, and perseverance? You really think they had? If it is truly so, I can assure you that they have been heard, though you do not know it. On another occasion Our Lord said: "*If a son ask his father for bread, will he give him a stone?*" It is very possible that what you asked for, in the eyes of God, was a stone, and, sorry for your foolishness, your good Father has denied you the stone, and given you in place of it His excellent bread. Often "*things are not what they seem*": no good prayer is ever fruitless; but God's ways are not our ways, and in Heaven we shall see and understand many things that for our good our kind Father hides from us now.

To return to the Rogation days. They are so called because on each day there is a procession, during which the Litany of the Saints, followed by special prayers, is sung, to beseech God to bless, by sending favourable weather, the fruits of the earth, on the quantity and quality of which our temporal prosperity depends. Then Thursday will be Ascension Day, the glorious feast on which Our Lord ascended into Heaven, accompanied by the holy crowd of Saints of the Old Law—those I named to you some weeks ago—and innumerable others, whom He had taken out of Limbo, and who "could not enter the Kingdom of Heaven till Christ had opened it for them." These words of the Catechism remind me to ask

you an important question : " Do you really know and understand perfectly both your Explanatory Catechism (Appendix and all) and the very important ' Children's Companion to the Catechism,' which contains principally minute explanations of the figures of the Messias and the miracles and parables of Our Blessed Lord in the very words of the New Testament ?" If at your age you do not know perfectly these two very small, but very precious books, I am sorry to tell you that you are not well-instructed young Catholics, and I hope your teachers will see to it and exact very severely these two necessary lessons from you. They are quite indispensable, and should precede my letters.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XXII

The Ascension

My dear Children,

The last apparition of Our Lord took place at Jerusalem, forty days after His Resurrection. The eleven Apostles and more than five hundred disciples were present. It was noon-day when He appeared to them, and He led them to the Mount of Olives, to a spot of which the exact indication is still preserved in the tradition of the Holy Places. The following account is from that part of the New Testament which is called the Acts of the Apostles, and was written by the Evangelist St. Luke: "They therefore, who were come together, asked Him, saying: Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom of Israel? But He said to them: It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in His own power; but you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth.

"And when He had said these things, while they looked on He was raised up, and a cloud received

Him out of their sight. And, while they were beholding Him going up to Heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments. Who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to Heaven? This Jesus, Who is taken up from you to Heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into Heaven." These words of two angels seem to me to imply, "What is the good of gazing up towards Heaven? You had much better go and do what He commanded you, for next time He will come down it will be *to judge you.*" There are many people now who think of Heaven, and talk about Heaven, and wonder whether Heaven will be like this, or like that, who do not trouble themselves much about living the holy life by which alone they can hope to reach Heaven. In his beautiful Twenty-sixth Psalm, David says: "*I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.*" Together with the "*Eye hath not seen,*" etc., of our Catechism, it is quite enough; but how to reach Heaven is the important thing for you and for me. In old pagan times a painter reproached a friend in the same profession with the slowness with which he worked, and the small number of pictures he produced, and this was the answer he received: "*Æternitati pingo*" (I paint for eternity), meaning that he worked slowly and carefully in order that his paintings might be valued and preserved in future ages. Let us borrow his two words, and give them a Catholic

meaning. How holy and how happy should we be if we could say with truth, every minute of our life, "*Æternitati pingo*" (I am painting for eternity), "I am doing all my actions in such a manner that even the very least may help to procure for me a happy eternity."

Do you know how to do this? First you must be in a state of grace; nothing done in a state of sin can do more than move God to give you the grace of a good Confession. Secondly, you must do the actions which are according to God's will for your state of life at the proper time, and as well as you can, turning them all to gold with the true philosopher's stone (surely you have heard of *alchemy*) of a holy intention, so that God may be moved to grant you final perseverance, a happy death. The best of intentions is that expressed in the little prayer before the Divine Office: "O Lord, in union with that Divine intention, wherewith Thou didst offer praises to God on earth, I offer these hours (or actions) to Thee." Some persons like to offer them in union with the intention with which the Sacred Heart of Jesus offers, every hour of the day and night, the tremendous Sacrifice of the Mass, for God's honour and man's salvation. Practise this last part of to-day's letter, and you will be Saints. At least, understand it, and try to aim at doing it.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XXIII

"Things are not what They Seem"

My dear Children,

To-day I will borrow a line from Longfellow's well-known "Psalm of Life," and, giving it a Catholic meaning, make use of it to explain to you a truth probably not placed before your minds until now. It is this one:

"*And things are not what they seem.*"

Suppose yourself in that awful city of millionaires, New York, and, by the intervention of a friend, allowed to spend the night in some room or balcony from which you can witness a magnificent ball at the house of one of them. Vast halls are splendidly decorated, and illuminated with thousands of electric lights of all colours, imitating the brightest jewels. Every appliance of art has embellished the features of the ladies, and the total value of the diamonds flashing from their gorgeous dresses would amount to millions of dollars. The music is simply heavenly, and I dare say you think that everything is heavenly, and that you will remember this sight when you wish to think of Heaven. Now, what would

God and His Angels and Saints probably see? A dark and hideous assemblage of human beings, monstrously disgusting and repulsive in the sight of Heaven on account of their mortal sins. Are there among them any bright spots at all, any souls in the state of grace? God knows, it may be; perhaps not *very* many.

A few days later you will travel with me in a most comfortable train across the whole breadth of the United States to the Pacific coast, and embark on board a steamer bound for the Sandwich Islands, in order to pay a visit to Molokai, a portion of one of them that has for many years been used exclusively as a leper settlement. There resides, without ever leaving the place, the heroic priest who succeeded the devoted Belgian, Father Damien, when the latter died of leprosy, contracted through his self-sacrificing life among the lepers. Nothing bright and beautiful can our eyes rest upon. You West Indian children know the dreadful havoc of this awful malady, the hideous countenances, the distorted features. But, again, "*things are not what they seem*" in the eyes of Heaven; there is brightness and beauty, the supernatural loveliness of many souls in a state of grace.

Sometimes it happens that a tender infant—the first, perhaps—is snatched away by death only a few days or hours after its baptism. The afflicted parents see nothing but their loss, rebel against God's will, do not call to

mind all that is joyful in the death of such a one; how, as Keble says, it is

"Just touched with Jesus' light, then lost in joys above."

I will not repeat here what I said on the subject in the letter on "An Infant's Death." When you see an instance of this among your relations or friends, bring all those beautiful truths to their mind.

Much greater is the loss of a child brought safely through the risks and dangers of infancy, in whom the use of reason has recently dawned. Baptismal innocence is still there, but who can tell how long it will be before the devil or bad companions destroy it? A fatal accident—drowning, falling from a height, being run over—cuts the thread of that young life. To the eyes that see nothing supernatural, what a calamity! But in the eyes of Heaven, it may be, what a blessing! The Guardian Angel knew the danger of that child's surroundings, prayed God to have mercy on his ward, and to take him at once. As Longfellow puts it:

"Oh! not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day;
'Twas an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flower away."

On the other hand, when a much-loved child lies in imminent danger of death, parents often pray madly, unconditionally, that his life may be spared, never adding: "My God, Thou knowest

what is best for him; Thy will be done." He lives, and they live long enough themselves to see him become their sorrow and their disgrace, causing them in bitter grief to exclaim: "Oh, that he had died when he was innocent!"

There is no necessity to place before you more contrasts. What I have said is sufficient to make you understand clearly that, taken in a Catholic, supernatural sense, very true indeed are the poet's words:

"*Things are not what they seem.*"

Ever yours devotedly,
A. Z.

XXIV

Pentecost

My dear Children,

You will receive this letter on the eve of Pentecost or Whit-Sunday. Before speaking of the coming of the Holy Ghost, I must remind you that there was also a Jewish Feast of Pentecost, in memory of the giving of the Commandments on Mount Sinai fifty days after the Pasch. The word "Pentecost" means "fiftieth," so, as Our Lord's Passion, death, and burial, took place in the week of the Pasch, and the Holy Ghost came down fifty days after Easter, His descent took place at the time of the Jewish Pentecost. This is why Jerusalem was crowded with strangers, Jews from all parts of the world, as it had been at the time of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I will copy for you the account given by St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles: "When the days of Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place" (the upper room used for the Last Supper); "and suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted

tongues, as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them ; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men of every nation under Heaven. And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed and wondered, saying : Behold, are not all these, that speak, Galileans ? And how have we heard, every man our own tongue wherein we were born ? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judæa, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome. Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians, we have heard them speak, in our own tongues, the wonderful works of God."

The Apostles had remained shut up in recollection and prayer together with the Blessed Virgin and a number of disciples (they were one hundred and twenty in all) from the day of the Ascension, in preparation for the descent of the Paraclete (the Comforter), the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, whom Jesus had promised to send to them, and by whose coming they were completely transformed. At that moment they received the plenitude of heavenly gifts, and the fulfilment of the promises of our Saviour ; the Catholic Church

received its confirmation and its Divine mission ; and it was then, says Monseigneur de Ségur, that, according to the most ancient traditions, St. Peter, the Pope, surrounded by all his brethren, celebrated for the first time the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

All this was noised abroad throughout Jerusalem, and many thousands of Jews came in haste to Mount Sion. St. Peter had pity on them, and began to preach to them the Resurrection and Divinity of Jesus Christ. Then, as you saw in St. Luke's narrative, thousands who could not understand Hebrew, the language spoken by the Apostles, all understood them, and every man thought they were speaking in his own tongue. By this miracle God taught that His Apostles were helped by Him, that His Church is the universal society of all nations, and that by means of His Church all are united in the same faith, the same truth, and in love for the same Lord.

Seeing this great wonder, which none could deny, almost all present without hesitation adored the God of St. Peter and the Apostles, and cried out : " What shall we do ?" St. Peter instructed them briefly in the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption, prepared them for baptism, and, assisted by his brethren, he that day baptized nearly five thousand, and the following Sunday three thousand more.

The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church. It is He who animates, sustains, and protects it, Who

gives it life, and makes it fruitful in all good works; it is He Who brings destruction upon its enemies, Who maintains it in the true Faith, and constantly assists the Pope, its infallible head.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and proceeds from the Son, as from the Father. Our Lord, the invisible Head and Ruler of His Church, works through the Holy Spirit, Whom He sends, as a heavenly dew, upon the souls of the faithful. It is the Holy Spirit Who governs and directs the Church, sanctifies the Saints, and strengthens the martyrs. It is the Holy Spirit Who makes fruitful Catholic institutions, and inspires heroic deeds. Nothing exists, and nothing can exist, without the working of the Holy Spirit, since He is, with the Father and the Son, the only true and living God, Creator and Lord of all things. Fallen Angels and sinful men drive Him from their hearts, where, with the Father and the Son, He ever desires to dwell; but the faithful children of God and His Church guard themselves carefully as the temples of the Holy Ghost, knowing well that the indwelling Spirit of God is their most precious possession, the source of all grace, and the seed of eternal happiness and glory.

I have been lending my pen to Monseigneur de Ségur.

This is one of those great Octaves during which the feast of no Saint can be celebrated; the Mass and the Office are always of the Octave. You

surely know the two beautiful hymns to the Holy Ghost. Say one or both of them every day during the Octave. The *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, used at Mass, is said to have been composed by Robert the Pious, one of the early Kings of France of the Capetian race; the *Veni Creator*, the hymn at Vespers, was composed by the great St. Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan. I think you will understand the hymn of the Mass better. Say it very slowly, paying great attention to the meaning of each line.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XXV

Trinity Sunday—St. Thomas Aquinas—Corpus Christi

My dear Children,

You will receive this letter on the eve of Trinity Sunday. Your island, thanks to the piety of its illustrious discoverer, bears the highest aud grandest of names, that of the Most Holy Trinity. You know that short but sublime prayer, the Doxology (*Gloria Patri*—Glory be to the Father, etc.), which was introduced into the Western part of the Catholic world by the great doctor, St. Jerome, who died in A.D. 420, almost 1,500 years ago. It is used at the end of every psalm of the Divine Office and decade of the Rosary. God alone knows what an inconceivable number of times it has been offered up since then by all the Saints and holy servants of God. Try to remember with what reverence and fervour they said it, and say it yourselves slowly and attentively. When God has bestowed on you any special favour, it is admirably suited for thanksgiving; but a few times well said will be better than a great many times said carelessly.

Thursday will be the glorious and happy Feast

of Corpus Christi, on which we joyfully celebrate the love of Jesus Christ in giving us the Holy Eucharist. One of His names is " Emmanuel," which means " God with us," which truly He is, living always amongst us in the most Blessed Sacrament. Maundy Thursday is overclouded with the sorrows of Our Lord's Passion; but on this feast, for those who go to Holy Communion and do their best to honour Him, there is nothing but joy.

It was instituted in consequence of a request of Jesus Christ Himself, in a revelation to Blessed Juliana of Retinne, who lived towards the end of the thirteenth century, and it became general in the Church after the Council of Vienne, about 1312. No one with even a moderate amount of Catholic instruction can think of Corpus Christi without a reverent and loving recollection of the *Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas*—the glory of the Dominican Order—who composed its beautiful Office. I am tempted to say much about him, but perhaps he shall have a letter all to himself some day. Pope Urban IV., when establishing the feast, chose St. Thomas and his *Franciscan* friend, the *Seraphic Doctor, St. Bonaventure,* to compose, each of them, an Office for it, reserving to himself the choice between the two compositions. When these were completed, they went to read them to the Holy Father. St. Thomas read his first. When he had finished, His Holiness turned to St. Bonaventure

to hear his, but it did not exist. Struck more and more, as he heard it, with the sublimity of that of his angelic friend, he had destroyed his own. To the words miraculously uttered by a crucifix at Naples, "*Well hast thou written concerning me, Thomas; what shall I give thee as a reward?*" St. Thomas replied, "*Nought but Thyself, O Lord.*" What wealth of Catholic doctrine and devotion are those deprived of, who know nothing, or next to nothing (every Catholic knows the *O Salutaris* and the *Tantum Ergo*), of the Office for Corpus Christi! The hymns alone would make them completely and solidly instructed about the Holy Eucharist. They are to be pitied, almost blamed. They know not even *O Sacrum Convivium*—that short antiphon that contains a whole meditation before Communion. It runs thus: "*O Sacred Banquet! in which Christ is received, the memory of His Passion is renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us!*" Of course, to those whose big pages of prayers come out of their mouths, like sheets of printing from an electric machine, such beautiful prayers mean nothing.

If you cannot do better, you might at least, each of you, copy from a borrowed book, in English, the *Ave Verum* to use at the Elevation, and the *Adoro Te Devote*, composed by St. Thomas on his death-bed, for the time of Exposition and Benediction. I am going to give you in prose, that you may understand it better, a translation of

the *Lauda Sion*, the hymn of this day's Mass, not quite word for word.

" O Sion, praise thy Saviour, sing hymns and canticles to thy Leader and Shepherd. Do thy very best, for He is above all praise. None is worthy of Him.

" What a subject for praise is the living and life-giving Bread offered to us to-day ! The same, without a doubt, that, on the sacred table of the Last Supper, was given to the twelve Apostles. Let our praise be full and sounding, joyful and beautiful, and great the happiness of our hearts. This day is the solemnity that brings to mind the origin and institution of this august Sacrament.

" The Pasch of the New Law puts an end in this banquet of the New King to all ancient figures.

" The old sacrifices are abolished by the New Victim ; shadows melt away before reality ; the darkness of night gives place to the brightness of day.

" What Jesus Christ commanded is to be accomplished in memory of Him. Instructed by His holy precepts, we consecrate the bread and wine, and change it into the Victim of our salvation.

" It is a dogma (truth) given to Christians that the bread becomes the Body of the Lord, the wine His Blood.

" A lively faith, rising above the order of nature, enables us to believe firmly what we can neither see nor understand. Under each species—signs, but no longer substances—are hidden precious

gifts. His Flesh is food, His Blood is drink; nevertheless, Christ is whole and entire under each species. He is received entire, without being cut, broken, or divided.

"One receives Him, a thousand receive Him; the one receives as much as the thousand. He is received whole and entire. The good receive Him, the bad receive Him; but how different is their fate! To the former He is life, to the latter death. He is death to the wicked, life to the good. See, how the same food can produce different effects.

"When the sign is broken, let not your faith waver. Remember that Jesus Christ is entire under the least crumb of the Sacred Host. The substance is not divided: the sign alone is broken; neither the state nor the size of what it represents is diminished. Behold the Bread of Angels become the Food of those who are on their journey. Truly the children's bread must not be cast to dogs. It was foreshadowed in the figures of the Old Law, in the sacrifice of Isaac and the Paschal Lamb, and in the manna given to our fathers.

"O Jesus! our Good Shepherd, our true Bread, have pity on us; feed us and support us, and make us to see Thy good things in the land of the living. Thou that knowest all things, and canst do all things, after being Thy guests here below, make us co-heirs and companions of Thy Saints in Thy Holy City."

St. Thomas has here given you a complete instruction on the Holy Eucharist.

Honour Our Lord by going to the procession, if you are sure that you will behave with recollection and devotion ; otherwise, I beg of you, stay at home. To laugh, speak, look about you, would be irreverence to Our Blessed Lord and scandal to non-Catholics looking on, causing them, naturally, to say : " Surely Catholics do not really believe what they affirm about their Holy Sacrament."

Ever yours devotedly,
A. Z.

XXVI

The Sacred Heart

My dear Children,

To-day's letter is not mine; it consists of a chapter from the Life of Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, and four suitable paragraphs from an anonymous writer, translated by Father Tickell, S.J. "The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is as ancient as the Church. It commenced upon the Cross, from the moment when the soldier's lance pierced this Divine Heart, and opened from henceforth an inviolable place of refuge to the faithful."

When the first Christians and the martyrs, with that faith and love which made them triumph over torments and death itself, kissed the wounds of Jesus crucified, who can doubt that, in applying their lips to the wounded side of their Redeemer, as they meditated on His Passion, they thought at the same time of His Sacred Heart, and of its infinite love, which seemed to burst forth in flames through that sacred opening in His side?

Thus, too, did the greatest Saints of every age—St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Gertrude, St. Mechtildis, St. Catherine of

Siena, penetrate the secret of this devotion long before it was proposed in any special revelation.

But it was reserved for the seventeenth century to see the Sacred Heart of Jesus honoured by a public worship, and for France to give birth to this devotion. The person whom God employed to make known His designs of mercy in the establishment of this devotion was a simple religious of the Visitation, at Paray le Monial, in Charolais, known by the name of Margaret Mary.

Jesus Christ, who had already favoured her with His most precious gifts, appeared to her one day, and said: "My Divine Heart is so full of love for men that, no longer able to restrain the flames of its burning charity, it must needs spread them abroad by every means, and manifest itself to men, to enrich them with the treasures it contains. To you I disclose these priceless treasures; they contain the graces of sanctification and salvation necessary to draw mankind from the abyss of perdition."

The designs of Our Divine Lord were made known to Blessed Margaret Mary some time afterwards in a still clearer manner. "Whilst praying before the Blessed Sacrament," she says, "on a day within the Octave of Corpus Christi, I received from God excessive graces of His love. As I felt myself moved with the desire of making Him a return of love for love, He said to me: 'You

cannot give Me any greater mark of your love than by doing what I have already so often asked of you.' Upon this, disclosing His Divine Heart, He said to me: 'Behold this Heart, which has loved men to such an excess that it has spared nothing, so as even to exhaust and consume itself in order to testify to them its love, and in return I receive from the greater part only ingratitude, in the neglect, irreverence, sacrilege, and coldness which I meet with from them in the Sacrament of My love.

"'But what afflicts Me most is that I receive this treatment from hearts which are especially consecrated to Me. For this reason I ask you to procure that the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi be set apart for a special feast to honour My Heart, by making an act of reparation to it, and by receiving Holy Communion on that day, in order to repair the indignities which it has received during the time that it has been exposed upon My altars, and I promise that My Heart shall dilate itself to shed in abundance the influence of its Divine love upon all who shall pay it this honour, or procure it to be paid.'" The humble religious replied: "To whom, O Lord, dost thou address Thyself? To so wretched a creature, so poor a sinner, that her unworthiness would be even capable of hindering the accomplishment of Thy design; Thou hast so many generous souls to execute it." "Do you not know, then," replied Our Lord, "that I make use of the weakest instruments to confound the

strong, and that it is in the little and the poor of spirit that I display My power with greater splendour, in order that they may attribute nothing to themselves?" "Do thou give me, then," rejoined the Sister, "the means of doing what Thou commandest."

Upon this Our Lord added: "Address yourself to My servant" (this was Father de la Colombière, S.J.), "and tell him from Me to do what he can to establish this devotion, and not to be discouraged at the difficulties which he will meet with, for there will be no lack of them; but let him remember that those alone are all-powerful who distrust themselves, and place all their confidence in Me."

Father de la Colombière, who had examined the sanctity of Margaret Mary with great care, and was satisfied by evident marks of the truth of her communications with God, considered himself called to contribute to the establishment of so holy a devotion, especially as it presented nothing which was open to suspicion. He began with himself, and wished to be the first disciple of the Heart of Jesus, and the first adorer of His love, according to the directions prescribed to Sister Margaret Mary. He accordingly consecrated himself to the Sacred Heart on the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi, June 21, 1675. This may be regarded as the day on which the Heart of Jesus made its first conquest. From that time this devotion, in spite of the censure

and opposition which it has met with, in common with every design inspired by Almighty God, has spread with marvellous success throughout the whole world, especially after receiving the solemn approval of the Holy See.

Thus the event proved how well founded was the confidence of Blessed Margaret Mary when she said : " Though I should see the whole world let loose in opposition to this devotion, I would never despair of seeing it established, since I have received an assurance of it from the mouth of Our Blessed Saviour Himself " (Languet).

" Persuade everyone over whom you have any influence to celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi, to receive Holy Communion on that day, and to make an act of reparation in atonement for the negligences, scandals, sacrileges, and other faults committed against the adorable Eucharist."

The Heart of Jesus has an infinite desire to be known and loved. It wishes us to address ourselves to it with great confidence, especially in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

In order to rekindle your devotion, remember that a single Mass procures greater glory to God than the merits of all the Saints together, and that the blessings attached to this adorable Sacrifice are greater than those which you can gain from your other prayers during your whole life.

Many do not know how to occupy themselves during Mass. What rapid progress they would make in the love of Jesus Christ, if they applied themselves to meditate on the Passion and the sorrows of His Heart each time that they assist at this Divine Sacrifice!

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XXVII

The Light of the World

My dear Children,

Have you ever watched the gradual rising of the sun when the eastern part of the landscape consists of a range of hills? You must have noticed first a pale, very pale glimmer, that shows where you may expect in due time to see it rise. Little by little the brightness increases; at last the hills are fringed with dazzling rays, and after these the glorious orb appears in all its splendour; it is too bright for your weak eyes, and you can gaze no longer. Was not the light behind the hill from the same magnificent sun that has now risen above it? Who can say, "The sun I see now is one thing, and the gradually increasing light which I saw before was another"? You would be the first to laugh at such an idea. I want you to understand that Catholic instruction is from the very beginning the *same* "*Sun of Justice*," our Saviour Jesus Christ, promised, prefigured, and foretold in the Old Testament, and before our eyes from the moment of which St. John speaks, in the beautiful beginning of his gospel which you read, or ought to read, every time you

assist at Holy Mass. "And the life was the *light of men:* and the *light* shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. . . . He was the *true light,* which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world . . . and *the Word was made flesh,* and dwelt amongst us; and *we saw His glory,* the glory, as it were, of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

It is time to give our attention to the New Testament, but not till I have shown you plainly that the Old Testament belongs to the New; it is the gradual dawn behind the hills. We cannot separate it from the sun of which it is a part. I dare say you often found your Bible history very irksome. I grant that it becomes difficult and complicated after the division of Solomon's kingdom, and that the very end of the Old Testament is not so interesting as many other parts. Perhaps when you saw the country reduced to a Roman province, you threw down your book, very glad to be rid of such an old-time lesson. That was because you did not understand that, according to a Father of the Church, Catholic historical instruction is "*Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*" If it were probable that among the children for whom I write a large proportion of the boys would become priests, and of the girls nuns, in convents where the *Divine Office* is recited daily, I would not pin you down over and over again to the recollection of the

Old Testament. In the Breviary you would meet continually, not only in the *Psalms* but also in the *Lessons of Matins*, with beautiful portions of the *Old Testament.* As it is, I must do my best for you. In the same way as I cannot let you think that you have done with the *Old*, when we begin to speak of the *New* Testament, I must tell you at once that your Catholic instruction does not end with the day of Pentecost, nor even with the Acts of the Apostles, in which St. Luke relates their labours. We have to see the history of the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ in His mystical body, the Catholic Church, from the coming of the Holy Ghost even to our own time.

Nor is this all; we saw Our Blessed Lord prefigured over and over again in the Old Testament. He is also to be seen much more frequently reproduced in the lives of His Saints, all of whom are, by His grace, in one way or another, "*other Christs.*" I have just this minute found out that one of my elder brothers, R.I.P. (in our Holy Father St. Dominic), the Rev. Henry Formby, Tertiary, wrote about fifty years ago the second part of this letter for me: "It is my conviction that nothing short of a narrative of the work of God, commenced at the beginning (the Creation) and carried down to the present time, can possibly afford any real protection to the young Christian, in the way of an outfit of Catholic knowledge sufficient to repel the prevailing temptations to unbelief, with which the whole of his life is likely

to be more and more beset as modern ideas proceed to develop themselves." My dear children, I do not consider my letters to be the complete narrative required. I always hope they have been preceded by the careful study of the "Explanatory Catechism" (Appendix included), and at least a short "Scripture History," not only of the time before Christ, but also of the Life of Our Lord. These two little books are indispensable before my letters. Your teachers have serious responsibility in this matter, and will have to answer to God for it if they omit their part of the work.

I continue my quotation: "This system is nothing more than a much-needed return to principles laid down more than a thousand years ago by the great doctor of the Church, St. Augustine, who twice declares that the only proper mode of instruction is a '*narratio perducta usque ad præsentia tempora ecclesiæ.*' The various portions of Catholic history (beginning at the Creation) are but so many constituent parts of the one scheme (plan) of Divine Government of the world, which it is the glory and perfection of the human mind to understand as one grand whole. Herein lies the true answer to the infidel. Armed with this knowledge, the Christian is furnished for the battle of life, and if he enters on this battle of life without it, it must be owned that he is in the condition of a soldier who has cast away part of his proper means of defence."

I have to put off the next beautiful paragraph

until next week's letter. I dare say you consider this copying a very lazy way of writing to you. It matters not if you do ; what matters is that, in one way or another, your minds should be nourished with the wholesome bread of Catholic instruction. Whenever I find it ready-made I will give it to you. Why should I waste my time in kneading and baking, in order to turn out an inferior article, when an excellent one is to hand ?

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XXVIII

The Life of the World

My dear Children,

I have more to tell you about the glorious *sun* that we watched rising behind the hills last week. You know very well that he is not only the light of our globe, but also its heat ; he vivifies as well as he illumines. The parts of the earth beyond the polar circles are so situated that they receive hardly any heat ; consequently, they have hardly any vegetable productions—a few mosses and lichens—and the parts quite near the poles, being farthest from the sun, none at all.

Now, from a spiritual, Catholic point of view, Our Lord Jesus Christ is not only the Light of the world, but also its Life. From the moment when God, after Adam's sin, promised to send a Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sun of Justice, began to rise behind the hills, gradually becoming more and more visible in figures and prophecies till He became Man, and walked, and spoke, and worked miracles for thirty-three years on this earth of ours. Now, you have realized that He was dawning all through the Old Testa-

ment; I have to explain to you that, on the day of the Ascension, He did not deprive His Church of His presence, but only of the sight of His presence. He remained on earth substantially in the Blessed Sacrament; spiritually in the pastors of His Church, whom He guides unceasingly, according to His promise, "*Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world*"; spiritually, also, in the souls of the just, which He vivifies by His presence, causing them to produce more or less fruit, according to their greater or less nearness to Him. The souls of the Saints are, like these tropical regions in which your Trinidad is situated, so wonderfully and rapidly productive that their fruits fill with amazement ordinary souls in the spiritual temperate zone, just as the wonderful vegetation of your island astonishes Europeans who gaze on it for the first time. The stupendous effects of the vivifying Sun of Justice, Our Lord Jesus Christ, like those of the material sun in the natural order, will continue to be produced until the day when, as we are plainly told in the Gospel for the last Sunday of the ecclesiastical year, "*the sun shall be darkened*," and the present world, both visible and invisible, shall come to an end.

Now I will give you the rest of last week's quotation: "All in the Divine plan is seen to be coherent and to hang together. Paradise is created, Adam and Eve are placed in it in lord-

ship over it. They fall from their original justice, and are banished from it, and forced to go and cultivate another part of the earth for their bread. They multiply, and the earth becomes filled with wickedness and violence. Prophets utter their warnings in vain, and the Flood comes.

"Noah, a priest and a prophet, who, together with his family, has been saved in the ark, is now constituted the patriarch of the new family which is to overspread and to possess the earth. Families multiply, and to prevent their being able to agree in any one false religion, God breaks them up into different languages, gives to each of them their respective settlements, and then leaves them to their own ways. Next comes the call of Abraham to be the patriarch of a chosen family, which is to increase, and to become a holy and peculiar nation, giving birth to many prophets and servants of God, and, lastly, to a Virgin who is to be the Mother of God Himself, the Second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity. Many things befall this nation between the time when Abraham is called and the time when, according to the prophecies, God Himself takes flesh in the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is reduced to slavery in Egypt; its priesthood is anointed, and a Temple is built in Jerusalem. It then splits into two rival kingdoms, one of which perishes, and the other is carried into captivity in Babylon; and at length, when the time comes for God the Son

to be born in it, according to the prophecy of Jacob, '*the sceptre has departed from Juda*,' it is under the Roman Empire, and has a stranger over it as King.

"Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the God-Man, the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary, appears in due time before His people, and is crucified by Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, at their request. On the third day He rises from the dead, and constitutes St. Peter and his successors for ever to be His Vicars, with supreme powers of government over the visible Church, which is now to be formed out of all the nations and tribes that seem hitherto to have been left to waste away in their own errors. St. Peter, after a time, permanently lodges his powers in the city of Rome, becomes the true Vicar of Jesus Christ, the supreme Pastor and Doctor of the entire Church. The Apostles go forth into all nations to fulfil their mission, and their preaching is everywhere accompanied with such signs and wonders that vast numbers in all the nations are converted, and the Christian society becomes visibly constituted before the eyes of men, St. Peter being everywhere recognized as its supreme visible head.

"The Roman Empire, after a little while, begins to persecute this visible Church, and immense numbers of its members suffer death as martyrs. In the end, however, the Roman Emperors yield,

and the Christians receive from them the gift of citizen rights. Time goes on, and the Roman Empire is divided into two parts: that of the West perishes in 476; that of the East continues till 1463. Barbarian hordes overrun Europe, but the successors of St. Peter take them in hand, and, seconded by the clergy of both Orders, and by the great family of St. Benedict and other monks, the world sees a far greater glory arise and cover the face of Europe under the Roman Pontiffs than the heathen Roman Empire was ever able to effect. European Christendom comes into being, and the Christian Roman Empire of the West is re-established by the successor of St. Peter in the person of Charlemagne. Then many new wonders arise: St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Ignatius Loyola, and St. Vincent of Paul appear, like stars in the firmament, and send their spiritual sons as missionaries all over the earth.

"The Gospel of the kingdom must be preached to all nations before the end can come. In this manner the drama of Church history continues up to our time, showing, in conclusion, how all eyes appear to turn, in the most remarkable manner, from the East and the West, the North and the South, towards the See of St. Peter. What God may have in store for the time to come He may reveal, in the measure in which He may see fit, by the light of prophecy. But the light of prophecy is not given in order to supersede the

light that is to be derived from sufficient knowledge of the history of the past. '*Remember the ancient days,*' says Moses; '*ask thy father, and he will relate to thee; ask thine elders, and they will tell thee*' (Deut. xxxii. 7)."

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XXIX

Scapulars—The Communion of Saints

My dear Children,

Try to remember that there has been but one English Pope, Nicholas Breakspeare, who, with the title of Adrian IV., reigned from 1154 to 1159; one religious Order founded in England, that of the Gilbertines, founded by St. Gilbert of Sempringham, the friend of St. Thomas à Becket; and one world-wide devotion that originated in England, that of the Carmelite, or Brown Scapular, revealed in England at Cambridge to St. Simon Stock, an Englishman. In the many persecutions raised against his Order, Simon, its Prior-General, went with filial confidence to the Blessed Mother of God. As he knelt in prayer in the White Friars' convent (Carmelites wear a white cloak over a brown habit; on account of their black *cappa* Dominicans were called Black Friars) at Cambridge, on July 16, 1251, she appeared before him, and presented him with the scapular in assurance of her protection. The devotion to the blessed habit spread quickly throughout the Christian world. Pope after Pope enriched it with indulgences, and innumerable

miracles put their seal upon its efficacy. I must again remind you that it is of no good to expect Our Lady's protection, on account of wearing her scapular, without also doing your best to lead a good life. Without this, the putting confidence in the scapular, or in any other devotion, would be only superstition and presumption, as I explained in my May letter about the Blessed Virgin. Listen to St. Alphonsus : " As men esteem it an honour to have persons who wear their livery, so is our Blessed Lady pleased that her clients should wear her scapular, as a mark that they have dedicated themselves to her service, and that they are members of the household of the Mother of God."

In an apparition to Pope John XXII., she commanded him to make it known that those who wear this scapular should, on certain conditions, be delivered from Purgatory on the Saturday after their death. This he did by a Bull, which was afterwards confirmed by Alexander V., Clement VII., and other Pontiffs. Paul V. explains the Bulls of his predecessors, and prescribes in his own the conditions on which the indulgences may be gained. These are : that each one should observe chastity according to his state of life, and recite daily the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin (Roman rite) ; those who cannot read must, instead, abstain from meat on Wednesday, and observe carefully the days of fasting and abstinence ordered by the Church. These

obligations are generally commuted by the priest who gives the scapular. In Trinidad, it seems to me, the *Sabbatine privilege* and its conditions are not much known ; this must be why those who receive the brown scapular never ask for a commutation of them. There are other scapulars ; you must have learnt about them in the Appendix to your "Explanatory Catechism." The scapular of the Holy Trinity is the only one that must be blessed each time it is renewed.

It is very fitting that, in this letter, I should speak to you of the *Communion of Saints*. You know the words of the Catechism. It means that all the members of the Church, in Heaven, on earth, and in Purgatory, are in communion with one another, as being *one* body in Jesus Christ. Our Lord is the Head. By many devout writers Our Lady is said to be the neck, because by her graces come from Our Lord to us ; and we are the members. Now, when you take a good meal you do not, and you could not if you would, order that the food should strengthen only a portion of your body, and not such-and-such members. So it is in the Catholic Church. The good works of each one are, in a certain measure, profitable to all. But over and above this, if you belong to any society or confraternity, you have another share, a special one, in the prayers and good works of the confraternity, and, if it is connected with a religious Order (as the brown scapular is with that of Mount Carmel ; the blue,

with the Theatine Order ; the black of Our Lady of Dolours with the Servite Order ; the white of the Holy Trinity with the Trinitarians ; the red of the Passion with the Lazarists and the Sisters of Charity ; the Confraternity of the Rosary with the Dominican Order), you have another in the prayers and good works of the Order also. You see, therefore, that it is profitable to belong to several, that you may have a share from several ; but, on the other hand, you must be careful not to undertake more than you can be faithful to in the way of prayers and other good works. It is not a *sin*, but it is an *abuse*, to have your name enrolled in a great many confraternities, and not fulfil any of the obligations. It is better to keep to our old rule : "*Minimum sed constans.*"

In the year 1636 Monsieur de Guge, a cornet in a cavalry regiment, was mortally wounded at the engagement of Tehin, a bullet having lodged near his heart. However, he had time to make his Confession and his will, which he wrote with his own hand. When this was done, the surgeon probed the wound, and the bullet was found to have driven his scapular into his heart. On its being withdrawn he presently expired, making profound acts of gratitude to the Blessed Virgin, who had prolonged his life miraculously, and thus preserved him from eternal death.—*Fr. Bowden's "Miniature Lives."*

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XXX

Answers for Non-Catholics—I

My dear Children,

It is necessary, especially in a country where non-Catholics abound, that you should know how to answer at least the most common objections they are likely to put before you on the simplest truths of Faith. One of them attacked me when I was not quite in my teens, but I was a pretty good match for him on account of the early and solid Catholic instruction that I had received. Poor blind ones! they are sometimes, not always, less to be blamed than pitied. First I must despatch, in a very few words, Satan's pet lamb, Mr. Infidel. If ever he brings his rot to you, asking you why you bother about soul or Church, when the next world no more exists for you than for your puppy or your kitten, just ask him if he feels himself in no way superior to a centipede or a cockroach, and with that question have done with him.

Let us return to those not so bad as he, the heretics. (If you have forgotten your Explanatory Catechism, ask the meaning of this

word.) They may say to you: "You Catholics say and write and believe that there is no chance of salvation out of your Church, often comparing it to the ark built by Noah, outside of which everyone was drowned; therefore you believe that every non-Catholic must go to hell." Oh! Mr. Non-Catholic, can you not afford sixpence, for which modest sum you can provide yourself with a valuable book called "Catholic Belief," and read it a little before talking such nonsense? At page 218 you would find this paragraph: "Catholics hold that such Protestants as *have no suspicion of their religion being false*, or *have not means to discover*, or *fail in their honest endeavours to discover*, the true religion, and who are so disposed in their heart that they *would, at any cost*, embrace the Roman Catholic Religion, *if they knew it to be the true one, are Catholics in spirit*, and in some sense *within the Catholic Church, without themselves knowing it.*"

Very different is the case of a person who, having the opportunity, neglects to learn from genuine, trustworthy sources what the Catholic religion is and really teaches, fearing that, were he to become convinced of the truth of the Catholic Faith, he would be compelled by his conscience to forsake his own religion, and bear the worldly inconveniences attached to this step. This very fear shows a want of good faith, and that he is not in that insurmountable ignorance which could

excuse him in the sight of God, but that he is one of those of whom it is said in Ps. xxxv. 4 : "*He would not understand, that he might do well.*" The Catholic Church claims also as her own all the Protestant infants whose baptism has been validly administered. I hope you have now understood that, while it is perfectly true that there is *no salvation possible outside of the One True Catholic Church,* it is possible, as explained above, *to be a Catholic without knowing it,* to be united to the *Soul of the Church* while *faultlessly* separated from her visible body.

Now, another thing that non-Catholics reproach us with : they say that we give too much honour to the Mother of God the Son made Man, whom they generally call "the Virgin Mary," though they see in the New Testament this verse of the *Magnificat : "All generations shall call me blessed."* Have they never read this line of Dante : "O Virgin Mother, *daughter of thy Son" ?* As God, He is her Creator, and she is the most wonderful and the most beautiful of His works. Does a sculptor feel jealous or offended when the loveliest of his statues is admired ? As Man He is her Son. I suppose Mr. Non-Catholic has or had an amiable, respectable, well-educated mother. Surely he is not jealous or offended when his mother is loved or appreciated ! Perhaps he says : "But you Catholics expect to be *saved by the Virgin Mary !"* Not a bit of it ; we hope to be

saved by *the same Precious Blood of her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ,* by which *she was saved from original and actual sin, and adorned with magnificent graces, to make her the worthy Mother of Him, Who is as God her Creator, and as Man her Son.*

With all this Mr. Non-Catholic is not yet done, for he is hard to kill. He still has another pet question to put to you : " Why, then, do you pray so much to her, and in your rosary say ten ' Hail Marys ' to one ' Our Father ' ?" My non-Catholic friend, I have heard that last year you were in some trouble, about which you had to petition His Excellency the Governor ; but I have not heard that you called upon him at St. Ann's, and put the paper yourself into his hands. You did the thing properly—handed your petition to the head clerk in the Colonial Secretary's office, and for once that you had a word with this high official, more than ten times, I am sure, you bothered his head clerk about the matter. Do spend a sixpence on the book mentioned above, and at page 199 you will read : " Catholics see clearly that in asking the Blessed Virgin to pray for them they thereby affirm that she is *not herself* the fountain of grace or of merit, since she herself, in order to obtain graces and merits for us, must, as well as we, have recourse to *God, her Creator and Saviour,* and that when she prays she prays only through the mediation and merits of her Divine Son.

In asking the Blessed Virgin Mary to *pray to Jesus* for us, we openly declare that "*Jesus Christ is our only Redeemer.*"

"The glories of the Mother are the reflection of the Divinity of her Son, and every crown that is wreathed for Mary is laid at Jesus' feet."

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XXXI

The Dominican Spirit—I

My dear Children,

St. Dominic might, to say the least of it, feel hurt if I, who belong to his glorious family, allowed his feast to pass without a Dominican letter. I will not speak to you of the history of his life, but just try to explain to you the spirit of his Order.

In a beautiful, artistically-laid-out garden there are lovely trees and flowers of all kinds, shapes, and colours. Suppose we came to have a foolish, eccentric Governor, of extremely bad taste, who should say on his arrival: "I am fond of red flowers; I cannot bear any others; so let all the others be pulled up, and the Botanic Gardens contain none that are not red." What an outcry there would be! what articles in the papers! Nothing would be left undone to prevent his stupid order from being executed.

In the lovely garden of Holy Church God has planted a number of kinds of beautiful flowers, all admirable, all more or less differing from each other in shape and colour; they are the glorious religious Orders—all from God, all planted by Him,

but at different times and for different purposes. Some Catholics do not seem to understand this; they are like the foolish man who would have only red flowers. In the same way as one of you may say, "I wear blue; it suits my complexion," a Catholic may say that the spirit and rule of such a holy founder suits his or her spiritual complexion, without contemning the others. Some think a great deal of the ancestors in the spiritual family they join. They feel they really cannot do without them. They like to say with Tobias: "*Filii sanctorum sumus.*" These must choose an ancient order; it is mathematically impossible to find a long line of illustrious ancestors in a very modern congregation. Others never give a thought to ancestors: they see a new flower lately produced by spiritual horticulture; they find it suits them exactly—the rule is just as if it had been written on purpose for them; they are delighted with this new institute; they do well to join it.

Now, for those of us who belong to St. Dominic, who chose him for our Father with so much joy and such special affection, that it seemed to us that no other Father could ever satisfy our hearts or win our love, it is right that we should cling to him till death, nourishing our souls with his spirit, observing faithfully his rule, calling on him in our wants, and also pleasing him by loving and honouring those glorious Dominican Saints, our elder brothers and sisters, who are his children also, his "*glory and his crown.*" We are not

without ancestors; we can say with Tobias: "*Filii sanctorum sumus.*" Now, what is the Dominican spirit? The motto of our Order is "*Veritas*"; and O.P. means *Order of Preachers.*

When an infant is brought to baptism, the priest puts this question: "What dost thou ask of the Church?"—"Faith." "What will faith give thee?"—"Life everlasting." *Faith,* then, which is the indispensable foundation of everything that pleases God, and which will procure for us life everlasting, is the highest gift, the one on which all the others rest. It is given to unconscious infants in Holy Baptism, but to those who have not received it by baptism before coming to the use of reason, "*Faith comes by hearing*" the truth explained and preached; and the spirit of St. Dominic's Order of *Friars Preachers* is the Apostolic spirit of zeal which urges them to use every means at their disposal to bring to as many souls as possible the precious gift of Divine faith by the preaching of the truth. You may perhaps answer that you see that very plainly in the lives of Dominican priests, but "what of lay-brothers, nuns of various kinds, and members of his Third Order? Surely none of these preach!" I will prove to you that, in one way or another, they help to bring the truth to the minds of those deprived of our holy Faith, or who are not acting up to it, and thus they do Dominican work: they preach in various ways, and bring God's light to those whose souls "*sit in darkness and in the*

shadow of death." Have you never heard of a great preacher (I forget to which order he belonged) who, seeing many converted by his sermons, was tempted to vainglory, and to whom God revealed that the conversions were due, not to his eloquent discourses, but to the prayers of the humble lay-brother sitting on the pulpit steps, and offering his rosary for the conversion of sinners? Who was really the preacher then?

I will return to this subject next week.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XXXII

The Dominican Spirit—II

My dear Children,

Let us turn to-day to the nuns—first the cloistered, contemplative ones that form the Second Order. They do the work of Moses on the mountain, praying with uplifted hands, while their apostolic brethren, the Friars Preachers, wage battle with those terrible enemies, ignorance, heresy, and infidelity, in the plain below. Do you not recollect that when Moses, by weariness, was forced to lower his arms the enemies were victorious? There are many, not only of those outside the Church, but even of her own Catholic children, that are heard to say: "I understand religious who do some kind of work, who teach, visit the poor, nurse the sick or the wounded, but as to those shut up in cloistered convents, who have nothing to show for themselves but a little church needlework or some hand-painted pictures, I do not see the good of them!" It is that these persons have no idea at all of the supernatural things that surround us. What steamers and railways and motor vehicles are to the material world,

the prayers, communions, penances of cloistered religious (of any Order) are to the invisible, supernatural world so near to us, even within ourselves, and so truly invisible to all but a small number of Catholics outside of monasteries and convents. From those enclosed ones God's marvellous streams of grace flow even to the very ends of the earth. If they were visible to us, we should see them starting from cloistered convents like the railway-lines on a map from head-stations. An obdurate sinner in Australia is suddenly transformed, approaches the Sacraments worthily. Everyone is amazed. But if this bright supernatural railway map were visible to us, we should see that from one of our holy cloistered Sisters praying fervently, perhaps as far off as our Trinidad, this grace had come. And this is continually going on ; and I think I have made you understand it. With regard to other Dominican nuns, of course, those who teach make it their first care to sow the marvellously productive seed of Catholic truth in the minds of their pupils, to whom they certainly preach.

Now, what about those who dress twice a day the repulsive sores of lepers, or nurse the sick in other hospitals ? You may be sure that, while they attend to the wounds of the body, they think still more of the wounds of the soul, and do all they can to heal them, or, rather, to bring them to their consecrated priest-brother, the Friar

Preacher. I have satisfied you concerning all kinds of Dominican nuns, but what about the members of our holy Father St. Dominic's Third Order? Do they preach? They are not good Tertiaries if they do not. First, they must give very excellent Catholic example, showing that, while in the world, they are not of the world, bringing something of the cloister into their homes, since it is not God's will that they should leave them to dwell in it. They may, like their holy sister St. Catherine of Siena, build a sanctuary in their hearts where they can hide themselves, even while, like her, they are busied in domestic duties. After preaching by good example, they can in many other ways preach—instructing the ignorant, preparing the sick for the Sacraments, giving courageously the right explanation when they hear the faith or practices of Holy Church ill-spoken of. St. Rose of Lima, the only canonized Saint of the devout female sex in the Western Hemisphere, was a Dominican Tertiary — not a conventual, but a secular one.

You who are children of the Holy Rosary are also, in a certain measure, children of St. Dominic. Let us all be faithful to him, and cultivate, above all, his spirit of Apostolic zeal, also invoking him, as children confident in the goodness of a loving Father, in the words of that beautiful responsory: "O spem miram quam dedisti mortis hora te flentibus dum post mortem promisisti te profu-

turum fratribus. *Imple, Pater, quod dixisti, nos tuis juvans precibus.*" Now, you must find out what that means. I am sure he will come to our assistance now, and, above all, at the hour of our death.

Ever yours devotedly,
A. Z.

XXXIII

The Assumption—Words of Solomon applied to Our Lady

My dear Children,

First a few words about the Assumption. This mystery means that Our Blessed Lady was taken up body and soul into Heaven after her death, by the power of her Divine Son. The Assumption is not, like the Immaculate Conception, an article of defined faith. The universal tradition of the Church is recorded by St. John Damascene, a Greek Father of the eighth century. He tells us that, at the time of the death of the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles who were spread over the world (known at that time) preaching to the Gentiles the truths learned from their Divine Master, were miraculously lifted up into the air in a moment of time, and gathered together in Jerusalem. A vision of Angels appeared to them, and the psalmody of the angelic hosts was heard, in the midst of which Our Blessed Lady gave up her soul to God. Her most pure body, which God afterwards marvellously raised up, was carried amidst the chants of

Angels and Apostles, and placed in a tomb in Gethsemane, where the angelic songs were heard for three days. St. Thomas, the only Apostle absent, arrived when they had ceased. To satisfy his great desire to behold once more the body of her who had been the Mother of God, the Apostles still present opened the tomb, but were unable to find anywhere the sacred body. They found the coverings in which it had been buried, and, having noticed the fragrant odour that came from the tomb, they closed it, concluding that He Who had deigned to become her Son, while preserving the Virginity of His Mother, had also been pleased to keep her immaculate body from corruption, and to translate it into Heaven before the day of the general resurrection.

Now let us turn to some beautiful words of Solomon applied by the Church to the Blessed Virgin: "*From the beginning, and before the world, was I created*"—that is to say, in the mind of God, in the intention of the Blessed Trinity. "*I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus*"—not only because, like the incorruptible cedar, Mary was untainted by sin, but also, according to Cardinal Hugo, because, "as the cedar, by its odour, drives away worms, Mary, by her sanctity, drives away the devils." She was also "*like a palm-tree in Cades*"—that is, says Blessed Albert the Great, "to defend." "The palm is a sign of victory,"

says St. Alphonsus, "and therefore our Queen is placed on high, as a palm, for a sign of certain victory to those who place themselves under her protection."

Alluding to the fragrance of her virtues, it is said: "*I gave a sweet smell like cinnamon and aromatic balm: I yielded a sweet odour like the choicest myrrh.*" The Church, in the words of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, makes Mary speak thus: "*As the vine, I brought forth a pleasant odour*"; concerning which words St. Bernard remarks that, in the same way as venomous reptiles fly from flowering vines, so do the devils fly from the souls in which they perceive the fragrance of devotion to Mary. Cornelius à Lapide gives a similar meaning to these words: "*As the lily among thorns, so is my beloved among the daughters,*" saying that, as the lily is a remedy against serpents, the invocation of Our Lady is a specific for overcoming all temptations, especially those against purity. "*As a fair olive-tree on the plains*" is added; for, as from the olive oil, a symbol of mercy, is extracted, so from the hands of Mary only grace and mercy proceed; and also, "*Thy name is as oil poured out*"; of which words Blessed Alanus, O.P., says that the glory of her name is compared to oil because it heals the sick, sends out a sweet odour, and nourishes flames. Thus does the name of Mary heal sinners, rejoice hearts, and inflame them with Divine love. The titles,

"*Valiant Woman, Unspotted Mirror, Tower of Ivory, Well of Living Waters, Terrible as an Army set in Array,*" from the writings of Solomon, are also applied to her.

I have often spoken to you of *the Sun* as a figure of Our Lord ; I must now show you that *the Moon* is a most fit image of His Holy Mother. In the Book of Genesis (the first of the Pentateuch, or Five Books of Moses) we read that "God made two lights — *a greater light to rule the day, and a lesser light to rule the night.*" Cardinal Hugo, explaining this, tells us that Christ is the greater light, to rule the just ; and Mary the lesser, to rule sinners—meaning that the sun is a figure of Jesus Christ, Whose light is enjoyed by those who live in the clear day of Divine grace ; and the moon a figure of Mary, by whose means those who are in the night of sin are enlightened. The moon, too, has no light of her own ; she reflects that which is received from the sun ; so does Our Lady illumine us with the wonderful graces received from her Divine Son. The dazzling light of the sun, like the Divine perfections of God, forces us to cast down our eyes and fear to gaze up at Him ; but the soft light of the moon, like Our Blessed Lady, to whom God has communicated His mercy, keeping His justice to Himself, allows us to look upon it without fear, even when, on account of our sins, we dare not appear before Him.

Then there are other texts from Solomon that teach us what great things we may expect if we practise solid, well-understood devotion to the Blessed Virgin. "*I am the Mother of Holy Hope.*" She is the Mother who gives birth to holy hope in our hearts—not to the hope of the worthless, fleeting treasures of this world, but of the eternal goods of Heaven. "Hail, then, O hope of my soul!" exclaims St. Ephrem; "hail, salvation of Christians, helper of sinners, fortress of the faithful, salvation of the world, by becoming the Mother of the world's Saviour!" "*Blessed is he that heareth me, and watcheth daily at my gates!*" meaning, "Blessed is he that is attentive to my advice, and applies at the door of my compassion, to beg for help from me." "*They that work by me shall not sin; they that explain me shall have life everlasting.*"

Many Saints tell us that *true* devotion to Our Lady is a mark of predestination; St. Bernard says that it is "*a most certain mark of eternal salvation.*" But never forget, my dear children, that it must be of the right kind, as I have already clearly explained to you. St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi saw in a vision a ship on the sea, steered by the Blessed Virgin, who was guiding it safely into port. By this the Saint understood that her clients are preserved by her from the shipwreck of sin in this life, and from eternal loss of their souls in the next. The figures of Our Lady in

the Old Testament will be for the Feast of her Immaculate Conception. I have consulted several books to do my best for the honour of our dear Mother and the increase of devotion to her in the souls of her children, and am happy to have done so, remembering the promise : *" They that explain me shall have life everlasting."*

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XXXIV

The New Testament

My dear Children,

Perhaps some of you have been saying to yourselves, "Shall we *never* get out of the *Old* Testament? When shall we be introduced to the *New?*" Do not be in a hurry to scold me. You are forgetting that you have already had five New Testament letters—three for Easter, one for Ascension Day, and one for Pentecost. In these five letters a great deal was related to you in the very words of the New Testament. It is the shorter, but by far the holier part of the Bible. It is necessarily shorter, because, historically, it has to do with not quite one century, the Old Testament comprising (at the very lowest computation) forty centuries. It is incomparably holier and more sacred, for it contains, not only the history, inspired by the Holy Ghost, of the life and death of our Redeemer, Our Lord Jesus Christ, but also much teaching in His very words. Still, I must again remind you that the two Testaments are not to be considered as two quite different books; the knowledge of the one

is incomplete without the knowledge of the other. The one is the preparation, the other the completion ; the one the dawn, the other the noonday sun. So, "*what God has joined together, let no man put asunder.*"

The New Testament (as you have learnt in your "Explanatory Catechism") consists of the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, twenty-two Epistles, and the Apocalypse (or Revelation) ; every one of these, as Holy Church commands us to believe under pain of excommunication as heretics, was inspired by the Holy Ghost.

Of the four Evangelists, or writers of the Gospels, two, St. Matthew and St. John, were Apostles ; the other two, St. Mark and St. Luke, were disciples of Apostles.

St. Matthew wrote his Gospel at Jerusalem, about six years after the Ascension of Our Lord, in Hebrew or Syriac, the language of the Jews at that time. The Apostles had been, till then, instructing only by word of mouth. They had made many converts, and continually administered the Holy Sacraments, but, so far, nothing had been written. The Christians of Jerusalem begged to have something left them in writing when the Apostles separated to evangelize other countries ; and St. Matthew was charged to write for them a record of the events of Our Saviour's life, so many of which he had witnessed. He

strove principally to prove by the actions and words of Jesus Christ that He was the Messias (the One to be sent), the Redeemer promised to their ancestors ; that all the prophecies had been fulfilled in Him ; that he had really risen from the dead and ascended into Heaven.

St. Mark, who wrote the second Gospel, was the disciple and companion — what we should call nowadays the private secretary — of St. Peter, the first Pope, who was chosen to be His vicar by Jesus Christ Himself. This second account of Our Lord's life, approved, perhaps even *dictated*, by St. Peter, was, according to Baronius, written in Latin, at that time the language spoken at Rome ; but the more general opinion is that St. Mark wrote it in Greek about ten years after Christ's Ascension.

St. Luke was a physician and a painter, converted by St. Paul—an Apostle, as he himself says, " *as one born out of due time,*" for his wonderful conversion took place a year after Our Lord had ascended into Heaven. St. Luke was to St. Paul very much like what St. Mark was to St. Peter—his disciple, companion, and fellow-labourer. His Gospel was written about twenty-four years after the Ascension. Some ignorant or ill-intentioned men had made alterations in the teaching of Jesus Christ. Even in the lifetime of the Apostles there were some heretics, some proud, obstinate individuals, the

forerunners of Arius, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, and many others, who from time to time, at the Devil's instigation, set up their own ideas in opposition to God's living, infallible Church. In order to rectify these errors, St. Luke goes back to the very beginning, relating the two annunciations by the Archangel St. Gabriel—the one to St. Zachary of the birth to him of a son, St. John the Baptist, the precursor of the Messias; the other to Our Blessed Lady of the mystery of the Incarnation, in which she was to fill such an important part, by consenting to become the Mother of the expected Redeemer. He gives the most details about the birth and infancy of Our Lord. He received information from the Apostles and disciples, and probably from Our Lady also, for he preached with St. Paul both at Ephesus and Jerusalem, where the holy Mother of God, who lived for fifteen years after her Divine Son had ascended to Heaven, was the Mother, the Counsellor and the Consoler of the infant Church. St. Luke wrote in Greek.

The fourth Evangelist, the Apostle St. John, the beloved disciple, who reclined on our Saviour's breast at the Last Supper, and who alone of them all was at the foot of the Cross when He died, after being miraculously preserved from martyrdom, lived to the age of about a hundred. He had been the youngest of those who followed Christ; and he wrote his Gospel

at Ephesus about sixty-three years after the Ascension, when the others were all dead. He wrote in Greek, and supplied many facts not mentioned by them. New heretics had arisen. In vain had it been pointed out to them how contrary their doctrines were to the teaching of the Apostles. These bold and hardened innovators did exactly what Luther and his compeers did in the sixteenth century, and are doing still: they refused to submit to the Church. The faithful had recourse to the aged Apostle, and St. Jerome relates that, when he was earnestly requested by the brethren to write his Gospel, he consented to do so on condition that there should be a common fast, and that prayers should be universally offered to God for His inspiration and blessing. After a long ecstasy, during which heavenly secrets were revealed to him, he burst forth into that sublime prelude, which is the last Gospel of Holy Mass: "In the beginning was the Word," etc. His Gospel breathes forth, even more than the three preceding ones, the spirit of Divine love. He dwells most emphatically on the words and miracles of Jesus Christ, which prove so clearly His Divinity and His equality with God the Father and God the Holy Ghost.

We ought not to be satisfied with knowing the portions of the Gospel read each Sunday, but should love to know much more by reading the

New Testament, a copy of which every good Catholic should make it a point to possess and to study. I will try to show you in my next letter how in the words of Our Blessed Lord are to be found instruction and consolation for every possible need of our souls.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XXXV

The Words of the Word

My dear Children,

The devout writer who found much consolation "in his little corner, with his little book," shows us plainly, by many a thing he says in his own valuable little book, the "Imitation of Christ," that the little book *he* relished especially was the New Testament, and, above all, the precious words of Our Lord Himself. To-day my letter is a serious one. I want to place before you a few of His Divine sayings, just as samples, to prove to you that you will find there so much in the way of instruction and consolation that it really seems wonderful that people should remain ignorant of it, and find themselves impelled to run after many big books. If they only read and meditated a little on His Sermon on the Mount, they would find plenty to practise, and would take a long time to become proficient in its execution. Our Blessed Lord said one day: "The queen of the south [of Saba] shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than

Solomon is here." He meant Himself, and *we* have His instructions, word for word, and if we follow them, we shall be Saints; at least, we should *know* them, and by degrees try to follow them a little. I will not choose for you the Beatitudes, as you know them, and jabber them in your Catechism, without attention to the meaning, but show you some similar blessings from another part of the Gospel. They are these: "*Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for you shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for you shall laugh. Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you: . . . for behold your reward is great in Heaven.* But it is also said, *woe to you that are rich, for you have your consolation. Woe to you that are filled, for you shall hunger. Woe to you that now laugh, for you shall mourn and weep.*"

These words are very contrary indeed to the ideas of this world, but if the day should come when you have to bear any of these things, the former will come to your mind as very consoling. The very first *recorded* words of our Saviour are those to His Mother and St. Joseph, when they found Him in the Temple: "*How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?*" Another time He said: "*Whosoever shall do the will of My Father that is in Heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.*" Now, have you, even now that you are so young, your "*Father's business*" to do, your "Father's

will" to obey? Certainly you have; we all have, from the moment we have the use of reason. We have to serve God, then, by following the plain-spoken words of our conscience, and little by little, as we receive more Catholic instruction, we have more to do. At your age (knowing, as I suppose you do, what God's Commandments and those of His Church require of you), if you, by receiving the Sacraments *frequently*, regularly, and worthily, and saying your prayers attentively and punctually, obtain God's abundant graces, you will certainly lead so good a life that you will be continually doing your Father's business, fulfilling the duties of your present state of life.

Now and then very difficult things are required of young people soon after they leave school. I will give you two examples: A young fellow, hardly old enough to be called a man, must begin to work. A good salary is offered him in some mercantile establishment, and he is glad to accept the place. Very soon he finds out that he is often required to do things against the virtue of justice—in plain English, to cheat purchasers in various ways. His conscience tells him he cannot; but the position is such a good one, the work light and easy, the pay good, it would be a pity to give it up. What words of Our Blessed Lord are for him? These plain, serious ones: "*What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the*

loss of his own soul"—by going to hell after extracting his unjust gains ?

Now, the young girl who has just left school must naturally, if she has no idea of being a nun, think of making a good match. One presents itself, in every way desirable, according to this world's interests ; but the young man, who is attractive, well-off, a pleasant talker, a good musician, is either a Protestant or, worse, an infidel. He will consent to promise anything, even in writing, but everyone is morally certain that he will break his word, that he will, as far as he can, prevent his wife from fulfilling her religious duties, and, worse than that, not allow his children to receive the inestimable blessing of a good Catholic education. In this case, again, Our Lord's words are plain and severe. The man would be a scandal to his wife, a stumbling-block on the road to Heaven ; and He says, not expecting us to mutilate our bodies, but to cast from us what seems as dear to us as our very members themselves : "*If thine eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, for it is better with one eye to enter the kingdom of God than with two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire.*" There is no hesitation possible, unless your mind is made up for hell. As to the souls of the children, I remember once hearing of a terrifying sermon on this subject, preached by a well-known English Dominican, Father Rooke (R.I.P.). He said that children in hell will, for all eternity, reproach their wretched parents for their damna-

tion. Our Lord also speaks severe words about the souls of the children : " *He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a mill-stone should be hung about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea.*" I must call your attention to a very serious matter concerning the souls of little children. Those who are much older must be very careful indeed never to say before them anything that could injure or destroy that precious innocence (ignorance of evil) which their Guardian Angels and the Devil watch so continually, the one to preserve, the other to destroy it. You would be doing the work of Satan, hurting their souls, and putting a grievous fault on your own. Perhaps you have never thought of this ; I am sure you will be very careful for the future.

And, again, to those who are disposed to set aside their religious duties to a great extent, to enjoy this present life, and take it easy, as far as their soul is concerned, Jesus Christ says : " *How narrow is the gate, and strait the way that leadeth to life : and few there are that find it.*"

" But surely," some may say, " I am too young to be pious ; I will make my Easter Communion, and go to Sunday Mass, and when I am getting old, I will be extremely pious." Our Lord warns us that He will come when not expected, " *like a thief in the night.*" Many do not live to grow old. And to those who will not give heed to His words, He says : " *Every one that heareth My words, and*

doeth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell, and floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof." The great fall is the loss of the soul. I find I shall have some day, in another letter, to give you some of the consoling words of Our Saviour; there is no room to-day.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XXXVI

Prayer for the Pope and the Church

My dear Children,

To-day I intended to give you some more of the holy sayings of Our Blessed Lord, but there came to me a thought that it would be well to entice you and help you to pray much for the Pope and the Church, by giving you a slight idea of the state of religion all over the earth in this first decade of the twentieth century. When we see a really vicious child, we exclaim, "What will he be when he grows up?" We may say the same of this vicious twentieth century, that is so conceited, and thinks so much of itself. Perhaps none of you has ever heard of the prophecies attributed to St. Malachy concerning the person or the reign of every Pope of the last nine centuries, and those of some time to come. Those applied to three Popes — "*cross upon cross,*" for Pius IX.; "*a light from Heaven,*" for Leo XIII.; "*a burning fire,*" for our present dear holy Father, Pius X.—have been wonderfully verified. The words applied to the next Pope, or rather his reign, are very terrible —"*Religio depopulata*"; and, looking at the

present evils, I am afraid they will be true. After this, there are eight remaining—five consoling ones, two mysterious ones, and, for the last of all, simply his name. They are these : "*Fides intrepida*," "*Pastor Angelicus*," "*Pastor et nauta*," "*Flos florum*," "*De medietate lunæ*," "*De labore solis*," "*Gloria olivæ*," "*Petrus Romanus*." They are interesting, but there is nothing at all that we are bound to believe in them, or indeed in the others.

You must not imagine that God's Vicar, the Pope, the successor of St. Peter, and his assistants, the Cardinals, and the Bishops, successors of the other Apostles, sit down quietly, so to speak, in the vast palace of Holy Church, merely taking an interest in Catholics, the children of Christ's Church, and not troubling their minds at all about the poor heretics, infidels, and pagans in the dreary spiritual desert outside. Now and then they see with sorrow a few of their own children desert the true Church, and either invent a new creed, or join one of the hundreds of forms of false belief that come straight from the Devil. These have always begun by being bad Catholics, sometimes even bad priests. I forget the name of the Anglican who said : "I wish the Pope, when he weeds his garden, would not throw his rubbish over our wall!" No ; our pastors, to whom our Lord said, "*Go and teach all nations*," would be very bad copies of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, if they made no attempt to save from Satan, the

wolf, the "*lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" Too many Catholics forget to pray for the Pope and the Church. How very few even take the trouble to answer the indulgenced prayers for these intentions ordered by Pope Leo XIII. to be said after every low Mass! I want to make interesting and easy for you the six *Paters*, *Aves*, and *Glorias* of the blue Scapular, to be said in honour of the Holy Trinity and the Immaculate Conception for the Pope's intentions, which I mentioned to you in my letter on "Indulgences," and by which even many plenary indulgences may be gained—one for yourself, the others for the souls in Purgatory. Remember, no indulgences for those with even one mortal sin on their conscience; state of grace first.

Now let us look at the state of religion in the world, our first *Pater*, *Ave* and *Gloria* being offered for Europe. In England the Church has enjoyed a good deal more liberty since Catholic Emancipation in 1829. Converts have been every year numerous, especially during the last sixty years; many religious communities, driven out of France, have taken refuge there. But, on the other hand, of late—especially at the present moment—what a terrible struggle or hand-to-hand fight between the Catholic Bishops and the Government over the souls of children—the question of religious education! The Church knows how much it matters, how indispensable it is that the Holy Faith, given to them by baptism, should be

nourished and kept alive by solid and sufficient Catholic instruction. Turn to France, governed by freemasons—persecution, robbing of all Church property, banishing of religious communities, and, consequently, thousands of children in danger of being brought up without any, or enough, religious instruction. Many parents are, alas! indifferent; thousands have neither the time nor the capability for instructing them themselves. In Spain, so far, things have not come to such a pass, but a strong and numerous party, headed by the freemasons, would fain make things as bad as in France. Impiety is rampant in Italy. The United Kingdom of Italy, formed by robbery about half a century ago, has at its head the grandson of the robber. The Pope despoiled, first of the States of the Church, then, in 1870, through the defection of France, of the city of Rome, is a prisoner in the palace of the Vatican. I cannot help thinking that, in the same way that disaster and defeat came from God to Napoleon I., when he attacked the rights of the Church, the calamities of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870-71 were sent as a punishment from God to his nephew, Napoleon III.

In Germany too much infidelity and heresy; in Russia schism and persecution of Catholic Poles; in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, Lutheranism; in Switzerland, heresy also. Surely I have told you more than enough for the first *Pater, Ave,* and *Gloria.*

The second for the vast continent of Asia, which contains in Mahometan Turkey in Asia, Canaan, or Palestine, or the Holy Land, where our Saviour lived and died, to recover which the Crusaders fought; the south-western countries, from the Malay Peninsula to the Black Sea, with the exception of India, where the worship of Buddha has also many millions of votaries, are inhabited by many millions of disciples of the false prophet Mahomet, one of the most, if not the most, successful of Satan's lieutenants. Thibet belongs to Brahma; the vast Empire of China and the more civilized Japan have each their own paganism—plenty of intentions for the second *Pater*, *Ave*, and *Gloria*.

The third for Africa. Mahometanism in Egypt and Algeria; various forms of the blackest and vilest idolatry amongst the native tribes (the *obeah* in Trinidad is from these); heresy striving by the side of Catholic Truth in portions belonging to England, and even sometimes in missions to the native tribes. It is in this continent that the Fathers of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, whom you know so well in Trinidad, have an immense number of churches and schools, by which thousands are converted and saved.

The fourth for Anglo-America (Canada and the United States). While the Catholic Church is progressing considerably in both these vast countries, the second especially, there is the

terrible thirst for wealth, the worship of the almighty dollar, so very hurtful to the salvation of souls ; and side by side with this, innumerable varieties of sects, and all kinds of vice.

Offer the fifth for Latin America. It comprises the vast countries colonized soon after their discovery by people of the Latin race, and extending from the Rio Grande, that separates the United States from Mexico, to Cape Horn, south of Patagonia. To these you may annex the West Indies. What have we to pray for in these countries, colonized, for the most part, by Spain and Portugal, evangelized centuries ago, as they are in some places now, by the sons of St. Francis, St. Dominic, and St. Ignatius ? They are like Spain and Portugal, from which they severed themselves to form independent republics (as the United States did in the eighteenth century from England), Catholic countries. But there is much to make us pray—freemasonry, much ignorance and carelessness concerning Catholic obligations, and, even where there is piety, much misunderstanding concerning it and many abuses.

Lastly, we must glance at Oceania. There we find the vast, prosperous, self-governing British colonies of Australia and New Zealand, the large island of Tasmania, and innumerable other islands more or less converted by heroic Catholic missionaries. Anything to pray for in Oceania ? A great deal. Heresy is there, too, and some paganism among the descendants of the abori-

gines (earliest inhabitants). You will not be able to think of all this, but if you study this letter you will have some little idea of what you have to pray for. Do not neglect, then, prayer for the Pope and the Church. Mother Margaret Hallahan, that "*valiant woman*," and foundress of a Dominican congregation in England, used to say to her pupils: "If you can afford to do so, give money to the Church and the poor, but always put the Church first." She knew that to further the interests of God's Church is to increase the fruit of our Saviour's Passion and Death, by procuring the salvation of the souls for which He suffered and died. At least you can give the Church your prayers.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XXXVII

Your Catholic Inheritance

My dear Children,

I am on terms of friendship with a well-to-do family, where there is only one child, a little girl; and, being given to observing, I (mentally, of course) make my observations. This little darling has enough toys—not common but expensive and beautiful ones—to stock a small toy-shop, but I do not find that she appreciates them, or even plays with them frequently. She forgets them, and is continually worrying her mother for a country drive, a visit to the islands, etc. I am very fond of comparisons, and I say to myself: "This child is just like thousands of Catholics—so rich in pleasures that she does not appreciate them."

Let us consider only two advantages of this city in which we live—many Catholic churches, many Catholic priests! What is implied in the possession of even one Catholic church? Three blessings of infinite value—daily Mass, the continual presence of the Blessed Sacrament, the administration of every Sacrament we need. What is daily Mass? The repetition every day

of the Holy Sacrifice of the Cross, in which Christ is each time really though mystically slain again for our salvation, in which mighty Sacrifice we may every day take part, thereby procuring for ourselves and our dear ones, living and dead, innumerable blessings, and, moreover, receive into our bodies and souls Our Lord Himself in His sacramental state. Listen to Thomas à Kempis, in the "Imitation of Christ": "*It is much to be lamented that many take so little notice of this saving mystery, which rejoices Heaven, and preserves the whole world. Oh! the blindness and hardness of the human heart, which does not consider so unspeakable a gift, but from daily use of it falls into disregard of it! For if this most Holy Sacrifice were only celebrated in one place, and only by one priest in the world, how great a desire would men have to go to that place and to that priest of God, that they might see the Divine mysteries celebrated!*"

That venerable English Bishop, of more than a century ago—Dr. Richard Challoner—who compiled that best of small prayer-books, the "Garden of the Soul," in the beautiful meditation before Communion, to be found in the old edition, says: "*The High Priest of the Old Testament was but once a year to enter into the inward sanctuary of the Temple, called the Holy of Holies, and then not without divers purifications and sacrifices, and a solemn fast of all Israel. See, then, how pure, how holy, thou oughtest to be, who art so often ad-*

mitted into the sanctuary of the New Testament—that is, to these Divine mysteries, sanctified by the presence of Jesus Christ Himself, the true Holy of Holies, of which that Jewish sanctuary was but the shadow." Not only do some who go to Mass assist at this tremendous sacrifice with little attention and devotion, but many—I am sure I can say thousands—in our city never dream of going a short distance to assist at Mass on week-days; while a good many commit mortal sin by absenting themselves from Sunday Mass, which is of obligation. They will not be able to make excuses for their sins to God by saying they had no strength to resist temptations, when they would not take a few steps, nor devote half an hour, to the picking up of the heavenly manna that fell every morning for the food of their souls.

Now, what about the continual presence of the Blessed Sacrament, which is Our Blessed Lord making Himself, so to speak, our next-door neighbour? I read, some time ago, in the London *Tablet*, that the little boys at Hodder, the school for juniors attached to the Jesuit College at Stonyhurst, had themselves requested that the Holy Name of *Jesus* should be placed in large gold letters on the door of the tabernacle in their chapel; "For," said one of them, "He must have His Name on His door like a doctor, to show that He expects visitors." That child's idea was quite correct. Our Lord does expect visitors, but He

gets very few, though the advantage would be all on their side. When He journeyed through Judæa and Galilee, many did not meet Him; some wished very much to speak to Him, but had no chance; now everyone, even those with mortal sin on their souls, may go quite near to Him, talk to Him about their sorrows and difficulties, ask His advice, beg His blessing on their undertakings, pray to Him for those they love, and obtain for all His precious gifts. Then, also, they can make friends beforehand with Him Who will be their Judge, saying to Him, in these two verses of the *Te Deum*: "*We believe that Thou wilt come to be our Judge. We pray Thee, therefore, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.*" There is no trouble, no necessity, no bad state of the soul, which cannot obtain relief from our Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament. Why, then, do so few go to Him? They are ungrateful to Our Lord, Who remains on earth for love of them, and are blind to their own interests.

The administration of the Sacraments and the possession of many priests is almost the same thing; they are the ministers of the Sacraments constantly required and repeated. I have read of a Saint who, to impress upon his hearers the sublime dignity of the Catholic priest, said: "If I met, in a narrow passage, an angel and a priest, I would make room for the *priest* to pass first." Of course it was only a way of speaking, for

angels, like glorified human bodies, require no room made for them, and cannot be inconvenienced by a narrow passage. Listen to the Blessed Curé d'Ars : " Have the greatest respect for the priest : without him you would not have with you on earth Jesus Christ. Who called Him down from Heaven and placed Him in that tabernacle ? *The priest.* Who received your soul at your entrance into life, and sanctified it by the waters of Baptism ? *The priest.* Who feeds it with the manna of Holy Communion ? *The priest.* Who will prepare it to appear before God ? *The priest—always the priest.* If this soul should die to God's grace, who will raise it to life ? *Again the priest.* You cannot call to mind any one of God's greatest benefits without *the priest* by the side of it. Of what use would a house full of gold be to you if you had no one to open its doors ? The priest holds the key to heavenly treasures : he opens the doors ; he is God's steward, the dispenser of His goods.

" If you confess your sins to the Blessed Virgin, or to an angel, can they give you absolution ? No. Will they give you the Body and Blood of Christ ? No. Our Lady cannot call down her Divine Son upon the altar. You might have hundreds of angels present ; they could not give you absolution. The humblest priest can do so ; he can say to you : ' Go in peace ; your sins are forgiven.' Oh, how great is the power and dignity of the Catholic priest !" These words

of the holy Curé should make you resolve to avoid, for the future, the least disrespect of any kind towards a priest. Even if you see plainly any fault in a priest, never speak of it, and respect him all the same, on account of his sacred character.

I am passing my limits, but at the risk of having my letter curtailed I must finish what I intended to say. In order to appreciate more highly our Catholic blessings, let us consider briefly what it would be if we were deprived of them. Those who enjoy them with avidity would feel it very much if the church nearest to them were closed only for one month, though by going a little farther they could get the same blessings at another. Do you not remember how, for six miserable years, England was placed under an interdict by the Pope, in punishment of the monstrous crimes of King John? What did that mean? Churches closed, no Mass, no Blessed Sacrament, no bells rung, no Sacraments administered, except Baptism to infants and Absolution to the dying. Remember that this happened in the time when Holy Mass and Our Lord's presence, the chanting of the Divine Office in those wonderfully beautiful cathedrals and abbey churches that Protestantism stole from us, and all the other consoling observances of our holy religion, were dear as the very breath of life to the inhabitants of Catholic England. What a terrible period of six years! No wonder that, on the day on which the

monster-King, fearing to lose his crown, submitted to the Pope, and the country was delivered from the state of interdict, the people sobbed with joy. Let us appreciate our great blessings, and take advantage of them, and may we never have the misfortune to live where there is no Catholic church and no Catholic priest.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XXXVIII

Consoling Words of Our Lord

My dear Children,

I come to-day to fulfil my promise of several weeks ago, by speaking to you of some of the most *consoling* words uttered for the solace of all our woes by Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us consider these very sweet ones : " *Come to me, all ye that labour and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you.*" If your elders read this letter, some of them may say : " What a text to choose for children ! They do not labour, nor are they heavily burdened with troubles and anxieties as we are." Dear grown-ups, were you such very exceptional children that you had nothing to suffer till you were quite grown up ? Have you, perhaps, very bad memories ? Have the grown-up troubles quite eclipsed the juvenile ones ? However it may be, even if I thought, as I do not, that children have nothing to suffer, I should keep to my text, for I want to write to them, as I said before, nothing that will not be as useful to them at seventy as at seventeen. School work is the principal duty of their age, and I

venture to say that it is distasteful to nine-tenths of them. Let us glance at other troubles. Some have lost their mother at an early age—what a number of sorrows arise from this loss!—others have to bear the privations and continual restraints imposed on them by the perpetual economy resulting from their parents' straitened circumstances, and others have to bear the being educated with children of an inferior class. And how cruel children can be sometimes to their school-fellows! What of the shy, reserved children, unpopular with teachers and companions? How many stings do their sensitive natures not have to bear in silence! And the poor, nervous ones, so often terrified without reason, and hiding fear that might be dispelled? Now I must speak of the bitterest sorrow of all, the heavier to bear the nearer a child is to the happy time of baptismal innocence—remorse after a real sin.

Parents who read this letter may wax indignant and say: "How dare this writer of letters even hint at the possibility of any fault more grievous than ordinary, childish peccadilloes in any of our children!" I know sometimes it is the case, and certainly it is not to their parents that they will reveal this sorrow. It is a pity that Catholic teachers, when telling children of Our Lord's real presence in the Blessed Sacrament, and impressing on them how reverent they must be, how silent

and well-behaved in Church, do not always impress upon them also the fact that He is there waiting lovingly to hear them relate to Him their sorrows, simply, without book or set form of prayer, in order to console and relieve them. I remember seeing, years ago, a letter written by a priest, on a day of First Communion, to a child whom he had prepared for that important act. It was not that he was absent—he may have delivered the letter himself—but he knew that "*scripta manent*," and it did not require the gift of prophecy to foresee that the future life of that child would be fraught with trouble; and it was so. I cannot tell you the very words, but I can give you exactly their meaning: "My child, this life is full of sorrows, the road to Heaven is often dark and always thorny; but the same Omnipotent Friend Who has visited you to-day is always in the tabernacle, waiting to help and console you. Go to Him in all your troubles, and He will teach you how to turn them into seeds of everlasting joy." There was more in the same strain, but this is enough for my purpose.

Setting aside the other troubles, let me speak of the last I mentioned, and the worst, sin. Confession is to most children, however gentle and indulgent the confessor may be, a difficult duty, but it is also the only remedy. Why should not children go over and over again, and speak of their sin and their difficulty to Our Lord in the

Blessed Sacrament before going to Confession? He would certainly receive them with joy and compassion, and, bestowing at each visit a greater grace, lead them gently at last to his representative, the priest. The thorn would soon be pulled out, the wound healed, and the peace and happiness of a good conscience restored.

Let them acquire the habit of taking to Him, with the same simplicity and confidence, all their sorrows, even to the very least. Knowing by experience its advantages, they will all through their lives make use of the same sovereign remedy. There are some who, so to speak, feel *shy* with Our Lord when their souls are in a bad state, and prefer to take their misery to Our Blessed Lady. It is true, she is the shortest and surest road to Him, but must we not also take into consideration these other words of His: "*They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are sick.*" "*I am come not to call the just, but sinners.*" "*I am the good Shepherd.*" "*Doth He* [the Good Shepherd] *not leave the ninety-nine* [the good] *in the desert, and go after that which was lost until He find it.*"

There is a way of going at the same time to both. When you go with your sins to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, ask Our Lady to come with you, to explain for you, to ask pardon and grace of Him for you. We are taught that passing a short time before the tabernacle without

book and without vocal prayer can do great good to our souls. The Blessed Curé d'Ars relates that he noticed a poor peasant, who spent a long time every day before the altar, gazing intently at it, but apparently saying no prayers. He at last asked the poor man what he did all the time, and received from him this answer: "*I look at Him and He looks at me.*" No doubt many graces were bestowed on this simple faith and silent prayer.

You are old enough now (especially in this country, where parents talk so openly of their affairs before their children) to know of family troubles and the anxiety of your parents about them. Are there any words of Our Blessed Lord specially uttered for this sort of trouble? Certainly there are, and they are very consoling: "*Why do you think among yourselves, O ye of little faith, for that you have no bread? . . . Do you not remember the five loaves among five thousand men, and how many baskets you took up?*" reminding us all of His goodness and His power. On one of these occasions He said before the miraculous multiplication of bread: "*I have compassion on the multitude, for they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat.*" Will he have less compassion now on us if we are with Him by the state of grace and submission to His holy will? Elsewhere he says to us: "*Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they*

reap, nor gather into barns; and your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? . . . And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field . . . they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. . . . Your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." These words of Our Lord are too plain to need any explanation; you understand them perfectly. It is possible that you may say that you have read of, and even known, very good people whom God allowed to fall into a state of great misery. What about that? Simply this: that, for some great spiritual good, God allows it, and it will be one of the pleasures of Heaven to see and understand God's dealings with His servants, to whom He has always given with great trials great graces to enable them to bear their tribulations, provided they have been faithful in easy things, and have asked every day fervently for the grace to bear the troubles of that day.

The manna in the desert fell every morning (except on the Sabbath Day), and I am quite sure that not one of the Israelites got into a terrible state of anxiety lest there might be none on the morrow. Let us follow Our Lord's words, *"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof,"*

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and their example, certain that each day will bring manna for our souls certainly and in abundance, and for our bodies just as much of this world's goods as the interests of our souls allow.

Ever yours devotedly,
A. Z.

XXXIX

The Holy Angels

My dear Children,

You are too old now to read fairy-tales, but not many years ago you were very fond of them, and you often said to yourselves, and probably sometimes to your companions also: "What a pity that fairies do not exist! How pleasant it would be to have a few, always setting things straight, helping us in our troubles, and procuring all sorts of good things for us!" Will you be astonished when I tell you that we have an immense number of friends, inconceivably more powerful and more willing to help us than the kindest and cleverest fairy ever born in the brain of the most imaginative story-teller? These are the holy Angels. They have two feasts very near together—St. Michael and All Angels on September 29, and the Holy Guardian Angels on October 2. I must speak of both in one letter, because the first letter of October I must reserve for the Feast of the Rosary.

It is believed that the holy Angels were created the same day (or distinct period of time) as the light. They are spiritual (that is, without bodies),

magnificently intellectual beings, to whom God gave, as He did to our first parents, free-will, that, by using it in submission to Him, they might merit His eternal reward. There was a great conflict in Heaven: the proud ones rebelled against God their Creator, saying, "*We will not serve*"; while St. Michael, the commander-in-chief of the humble, obedient ones, cried out, "*Mi-ca-El!*" or, "*Who is like to God?*"—from which words he gets his name. The Church has always venerated him as her special protector. His name is invoked in the *Confiteor* and in the prayers for the agonizing; he is considered the escort of Christians from Purgatory to Heaven, the guardian of the Blessed Sacrament and of the Sovereign Pontiff, the Angel of the Holy Sacrifice mentioned in the Canon of the Mass. Lastly, when *Antichrist* shall have set up his kingdom on earth, it is the Archangel Michael who, bearing the standard of the Cross, will sound the trumpet, and, binding together the false prophet and the beast, hurl them down into hell for all eternity. The Feast of Michaelmas was kept with such solemnity in the happy times of *Catholic* England that, by the Saxon laws, it was preceded by a fast of three days, with complete rest from servile work, while on the day itself every man went barefoot to the church for Confession. St. Michael was also the patron of the Norman Kings of England, and the old English coin, "the angel," bore on it the winged figure of the great Archangel.

St. Raphael, the Angel of healing, came down from Heaven (as you must remember) under the form of a young man, and was named Azarias, at the time of the Captivity of the ten tribes of Israel to Ninive, to console and assist the holy Tobias and his son. He accompanied the young Tobias on his journey; saved him from the monstrous fish, making him keep portions of it, by means of which he preserved him from the fate of Sara's seven husbands, and cured his father's eyes; went to Rages to get the money from Gabelus, and on their return made himself known to them as "Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord." His salutation had been, "*Gaudium sit tibi semper*" (*Joy be to thee always*), and his farewell words were, "*Peace be to you. Fear not.*" Devotion to the holy Angels is a sure way to gain spiritual joy.

St. Gabriel is the Archangel of the two annunciations—that of the birth of St. John the Baptist, Our Lord's cousin and precursor, to his father St. Zachary; and that of the stupendous mystery of the Incarnation to the humble Virgin Mary, destined to be the mother of the long-expected Messias, the Redeemer of the human race, God the Son made man for our salvation. His beautiful salutation to her forms the beginning of the "Hail Mary." No words were ever said before or since more joyful for us, more glorious for her; and surely no words can be said more agreeable to her now than those which announced her stupendous

dignity. Let us say them slowly and reverently. I have heard it said of a young lady in Port of Spain, whom Our Lady took to Heaven on one of her greatest feasts, that she bowed her head reverently every time she said " Hail, Mary !"

We must speak now of the Guardian Angels, to one of whom is assigned the duty of remaining near to each one of us, always taking care of us, driving away the Devil, whispering to us holy inspirations, ever trying to keep us faithful to God, never abandoning the soul committed to his care, unless, alas ! he has the sorrow of separating from her for ever at the gate of hell.

St. Augustine, a great doctor of the Church, says of the holy Angels : " They love their fellow-citizens, whom they expect to fill the places left vacant by their companions' fall. Therefore, at all times, and in all places, they earnestly and anxiously watch us, to help us and provide for our wants. They accompany us in all our ways ; they go in and out with us, and observe attentively how piously and honestly we live in the midst of a corrupt people. They assist us in our labours ; they protect us in our repose ; they encourage us in combat ; they crown us in victory ; they rejoice with us when we rejoice, and sympathize with us when we suffer. When we do well, the Angels rejoice, and the devils are sorry. When we turn away from good, we gladden the devils, and deprive the Angels of their joy." We should reverence at all times, and in all places, the presence

of our Guardian Angel. St. Bernard gives this excellent rule: "Maintain thy reverence alike in every corner where thou goest. Wilt thou dare to do in his presence what thou durst not do in mine?"

We read of many Saints and holy persons who were in the habit of providing themselves with an angelic protector in every undertaking, engaging not only their own Guardian Angels, but also those of the persons with whom they were engaged, for their safety and peace, or the promotion of God's glory. Follow their example, and you will find it a secret and most effectual way of obtaining success in your undertakings, and escaping from many dangers.

The patriarch Jacob prayed his good Angel to bless his grandsons, Ephraïm and Manasses, saying, "*The angel that delivereth me from all evil bless these boys.*" David, in one of his Psalms, assures us, "*He hath given His Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways*"; and in another, "*The Angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear Him, and He shall deliver them.*" Judith, when she returned to Bethulia, bearing the head of Holofernes, whom she had slain, said: "*His Angel hath been my keeper, both going hence, and abiding there, and returning from thence.*" So certain and general was the belief in a Guardian Angel being assigned to every one by God, that when St. Peter was miraculously delivered out of prison, his disciples, on his coming to them, could

not at first believe it to be Peter, and said, "*It is his Angel*" (Acts xii. 15). We must have great confidence in our good Angel. Listen again to the great St. Bernard: "Though we are so weak, and our condition so low, though a long and dangerous way lies before us, what can we fear under such great guardians? As often as any tribulation or temptation assails you, implore your guardian, your guide, your helper in trouble and in all times of need." To deserve his protection we must avoid sin; even venial sin troubles him. Say sometimes this short indulgenced prayer:

"Angel of God, my Guardian dear,
To whom His love commits me here,
Ever this day [or night] be at my side,
To light, to guard, to rule and guide."

Ever yours devotedly,
A. Z.

XL

The Rosary

My dear Children,

This letter must be my very best. It is for our Dominican feast of feasts, fifteen feasts in one, our Heavenly Mother's Feast of Roses. No doubt about the state of grace to-day: you have all been to Holy Communion; you are all trying to gain as many plenary indulgences as you can for the suffering souls in Purgatory, by visits to the altar of the Rosary. I loved the Holy Rosary long before I wore St. Dominic's white wool, so I am bound to do my very best. I will not teach you how to say your Rosary; there are many excellent ways, and many penny books to help you. My only piece of advice is to try and say your Rosary as much as you can before the Blessed Sacrament, remembering all the time that Jesus Christ — *Emmanuel*, "God with us"—is truly present in the tabernacle, the very same Who, as the Nicene Creed tells us at Mass, "*for us men, and for our salvation, came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man; Who was crucified also for*

us, and was buried; Who rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into Heaven;" the same Jesus that sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, and sent Him to us in Confirmation; Who preserved His Mother's pure body from corruption, and assumed it into Heaven, where He crowned her with the brightest diadem of glory; the same Jesus Who will be our Judge, and Who will crown us, too, if, while clinging to Our Lady's Rosary (the chain of final perseverance, as Father Faber calls it), we try, in our measure, to imitate her virtues. I thought at first of collecting for you examples of wonderful favours received through the Rosary, but I shall just give you one true story of a fact that fell under my own observation, and then I will tell you about the miraculous Battle of Lepanto, in thanksgiving for which this feast was instituted. First my little true story.

A very intimate friend of mine having some years ago received great favours through Our Blessed Lady, the crowning and principal one on January 1, resolved, for the future, to say every day, kneeling, five decades of the Rosary. This resolution was faithfully kept for exactly eight months. The Rosary was omitted for the first time on September 1. The very next day a terrible misfortune happened to my friend, and we have always both of us believed it was occasioned by that omission of the Rosary. It is not that it is a sin to omit a prayer that we generally say,

but a grace is attached to it—in the case of the Rosary, I believe a very great one—and by omitting it we incur serious loss to our soul.

Let us turn to the victory of Lepanto. You must know that, in the third chapter of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, God said, speaking to the Devil under the form of a serpent: "*I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel* (Gen. iii. 15). And it seems clear from many historical events that this enmity between Our Lady and the Devil exists also between the Blessed Mother of God aad Satan's most terrible lieutenant, that arch-impostor, the false prophet Mahomet. The millions of souls he has sent, and is still sending, to hell, and his teaching concerning her Divine Son, are sufficient reasons for her hatred. The Mahometan war-cry is, "*God alone is God, and Mahomet is his prophet!*" He taught that God had sent *seven* great prophets into the world, that Jesus Christ was only one of these, and that he himself was the last and the greatest of all.

I suppose you know a little about some of the Crusades. In the History of England, that seems to have turned out all other profane Histories from the education at least of girls at the present day, you must have seen that the ill-fated Robert of Normandy, brother of the first monster of English history, William Rufus, pawned his Duchy of Normandy to procure money to equip

his followers for the First Crusade; that Richard Cœur-de-Lion, brother of the second of English monsters, John Lackland, was, with Philip Augustus of France, at the Third Crusade; and that Edward, when Prince of Wales, joined St. Louis of France in the Seventh Crusade. All these holy wars were waged to wrest the Holy Land, where our Saviour lived and died, from the Mahometan Saracens. But the spirit of Catholic chivalry dwindled away; the terrible Hundred Years' War that England carried on unjustly against France, and the fearful civil Wars of the Roses, occupied England for many a long year; the other countries of Europe had their own private selfish interests to attend to; and at last—a just retribution for centuries of schism, and many heresies before these—in 1463, the Roman Empire of the East was destroyed by the Mahometan Turks, who settled themselves in Christian Europe, and have been there ever since. It was soon after this, in 1467, that the fresco of Our Lady of Good Counsel (not long before the Turks ravaged the country) left Albania miraculously, and fled to Genazzano in Italy. Eleanor of Castile had said to those who tried to persuade her not to accompany her husband, Edward I., to the Seventh Crusade: "The way to Heaven is as short from Syria as from England or Spain." Another valiant woman, the admirable Countess of Richmond, mother of that wily, money-grubbing King, Henry VII., the first Tudor, deploring,

in 1485, the ravages of the Turks in Europe, had exclaimed : " Oh, that Christian Kings would lay aside their quarrels and unite against the infidels ! I would willingly accompany them, and be the washerwoman in their camp." But the spirit of the Crusaders was gone for ever; there was nothing of it in her miserly son ; still less, if possible, in that sovereign, who was almost his contemporary, the wicked old fox, Louis XI. of France.

But here I find I must, for fear of being too long, defer my account of the victory until our next paper.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XLI

The Battle of Lepanto

My dear Children,

St. Pius V., a Dominican from his fifteenth year, filled the chair of St. Peter at the time of the Battle of Lepanto. It was he who consoled the ill-fated Queen, Mary Stuart, in her cruel captivity, even sending her some consecrated Hosts, with permission to communicate herself; and who also excommunicated the fourth monster of English history, Queen Elizabeth (whose father, Henry VIII., was the third), when the measure of her iniquities was filled up.

I will abridge for you the account of the great victory, which is given in the Life of St. Pius V. Selim II., Emperor of the Turks, proposed to overrun all Christendom with his arms, and to add the western countries of Europe to his Empire. When Italy was afflicted by famine, and the great arsenal of Venice was almost entirely destroyed by fire, he haughtily demanded of that Republic the surrender of the island of Cyprus, as satisfaction for pretended injuries. The infidels invaded the island, took Nicosia by storm in 1570, after a siege of forty-eight days, and in 1571 Famagusta,

by capitulation, after having battered that city with 1,500,000 shot during a siege of seventy-five days. Notwithstanding an agreement, ratified by solemn oaths, Bashaw Mustapha perfidiously put to a cruel death the Venetian officers, and caused their valiant Governor, after cutting off his nose and ears and tormenting him for many days, to be flayed alive—all of which he suffered with admirable patience, expiring when the skin was torn off him to his waist. Alarmed at the danger which threatened Christendom, St. Pius V. entered into a league with Philip II. of Spain and the Venetians to check the progress of the Mahometans. The Pope was declared chief of the league, and appointed Mark Antony Colonna General of his galleys, and Don John of Austria, Generalissimo of his forces. The Pope sent to the General, together with his Apostolic blessing, a prediction of certain victory, and an order to dismiss all who seemed to enlist for the sake of plunder, and all those whose bad conduct might draw down God's anger upon their arms.

The Christians sailed from Corfu, and found the Turkish fleet at anchor in the harbour of Lepanto. The Turks sailed out in order of battle, and a little after sunrise their fleet, consisting of 330 sail, appeared in sight, placing themselves, as usual, in the form of a crescent, the Mahometan emblem. Don John gave the signal for battle by hanging out the Pope's banner, on which an image of Christ crucified was embroidered. The

Christian Generals harangued their soldiers, and gave the signal for prayers, at which the soldiers fell on their knees before a crucifix, and remained in prayer till the fleets drew near to each other, when, at a second signal, the battle began. The Turks bore down with rapidity on the Christians, assisted by a brisk gale of wind, which promised them the greatest advantage, especially as they were superior in numbers. But the wind, which before was very strong, fell as soon as the battle began, and was succeeded by a calm, followed by a high wind in the opposite direction, entirely favourable to the Christians. This wind carried the smoke and fire of their artillery straight on to the enemy, and almost blinded them, and at length quite bore them down. The conflict was obstinate and bloody, and the victory the most complete ever gained over the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire. At last the Turkish Admiral escaped with only thirty galleys, about 300 having been taken or sunk. This battle was fought on October 7, 1571, and continued from six in the morning till evening, when the approaching darkness and the roughness of the sea obliged the Christians to seek shelter in the nearest harbours. The Turks, with their haughty Emperor, were seized with consternation at the news of their overthrow, and the city of Constantinople was as much alarmed as if the enemy was encamped before its gates. The Turks lost, at Lepanto, 30,000 men, with their General, Hali, and about 300 ships; also 116 great pieces of

cannon, 256 of smaller calibre, and 5,000 prisoners. The booty was great, for the Turkish fleet was laden with the plunder of many merchantmen and of several islands; 15,000 slaves, found chained on board their galleys, were set at liberty.

The holy Pope, from the beginning of the expedition, had ordered public prayers and fasts, and had not ceased himself to solicit Heaven, with uplifted hands, like Moses on the mountain, besides afflicting his own body by fasts and vigils. While the battle was being waged, the procession of the Rosary in the Church of the Minerva, the principal Dominican church in Rome, was pouring forth solemn prayers for victory. St. Pius was at the time conversing with some Cardinals on business, but suddenly he left them, and opening the window, stood for some time with his eyes raised towards Heaven, and then, closing the casement, said: "It is now no time to talk upon business, but to give thanks to God for the victory He has granted to the Christian arms." In consequence of this miraculous success, St. Pius ordered the Feast of the Rosary to be kept on the first Sunday of October, in perpetual thanksgiving to God, and inserted the words "Help of Christians" in the Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

I must also tell you that the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary (*Sunday after her Nativity*) was instituted to commemorate another Christian vic-

tory over the Mahometan Turks, through the intercession of Our Lady, in 1683, when Vienna was besieged by them. The devout King of Poland, John Sobieski, with the Duke of Lorraine, heard Mass on the morning of August 12 in St. Leopold's Chapel, the King himself serving the Mass; he received Holy Communion, and after Mass the blessing which the priest gave to the whole army. Then, rising from his knees, he said aloud: "Let us now march against the enemy, with confidence in the protection of Heaven, and under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin." They gained a complete victory, and captured such immense riches that John Sobieski wrote to his Queen: "The Grand-Vizier has made me his sole executor." One great Turkish standard was hung up in the principal church of Vienna, and that of Mahomet was sent to the Pope. The Turks left behind 180 pieces of heavy ordnance; the Christians lost no more than 600 men.

You see, my dear children, how powerful our Heavenly Queen and Mother is. Let us invoke her in all our troubles, especially when those preternatural Turks, the devils, attack our souls, and try to vanquish us by making us fall into sin.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XLII

Pax

My dear Children,

The subject of to-day's letter is more than pleasant, it is delightful : *Pax*—peace ! This best possible possession, spoken of so often in the Old Testament, and by Our Lord Himself in the New, is defined by the great St. Thomas Aquinas as "*the tranquillity of order.*" It is absolutely indispensable to the happiness, not only of those who are grown up, but just as much to that of every child who has reached the age of reason. Notice that I do not say " every Catholic child," for every child—pagan, Mahometan, heretic though he may be—has at least the natural law, implanted by God in all human beings, and in the case of heretics more or less over and above the law of nature, from the Holy Bible ; while of the gradually instructed conscience of the Catholic child a great deal more is required. This first degree of spiritual peace is simply the state of grace, the being in order in the sight of God by being without mortal sin. Very young children are generally supposed to be both innocent and happy. In the letter on an infant's funeral it

was sufficiently explained to you that the use of reason, and consequently the capability of committing mortal sin, may be found in some children long before the age of seven. From the moment that one of these is decoyed by Satan's mighty cleverness into even one grievous sin there is no peace with God, therefore no happiness. The inspired words, "there is no peace for the wicked," are as true of that child as of a hoary-headed sinner of ninety. You were told that the beautiful Office of Compline keeps before the mind sleep and death. To these might be added peace, without which one can have neither "*noctem quietam*" nor "*finem perfectum*" (neither a "*quiet night*" nor a "*perfect end*")—a happy death, of which a quiet night is a figure.

"*In pace in idipsum dormiam, et requiescam. Quoniam tu, Domine, singulariter in spe constituisti me*" (Ps. iv. 9, 10)—"In *peace*, in the selfsame, I will sleep, and will rest. For Thou, O Lord, singularly hast settled me in hope." Who is justified in using these words but one in a state of grace, a good conscience in peace with God? "They cry peace, peace, and there is no peace," we read elsewhere in Holy Writ, and these words are quite as applicable to a child with one mortal sin as to an older sinner who has committed hundreds.

Let us quote a few words about peace from the New Testament and the Liturgy of the Church. In the happy Christmas night in which the *Prince*

of Peace, God the Son, made man for us, was born into this world, the Angels sang, "*Peace on earth to men of good will.*" After His last supper Our Lord, in His discourse to His Apostles, bequeathed to them His peace: "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you.*" When appearing to His Apostles on the evening after His Resurrection, his greeting was, "*Peace be to you: it is I, fear not*"; and a week after He salutes them again with, "*Peace be to you.*" Before conferring on them the power of forgiving sins, he says, "*Peace be to you.*"

Let us consider the occasions on which our Holy Mother the Church wishes us this holy peace.

She dismisses the newly baptized child with the words, "*Vade in pace*" (*Go in peace*). In Confirmation, with the little blow on the cheek, the Bishop says, "*Pax tecum.*" After freeing us from sin by Absolution, the priest bids us "*Go in peace*"; before the Communion in the Mass he prays the Lamb of God, Who taketh away the sins of the world, to "*give us peace*"; when he will bring to us our Last Communion, our Viaticum, or food for our last journey, his words on entering our room will be: "*Peace be to this house, and to all who dwell therein*"; and in a beautiful prayer, to be recited by the priest beside the dying, occur these words: "*Adsint Angeli pacis*" (*May the Angels of peace be here*). The last words of the Burial Service also are, "*May he*

rest in peace." In the prayer "*for peace*" in the Liturgy, Holy Church teaches us how this most desirable peace is to be found: "*Grant to Thy servants that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts being intent upon Thy commandments, and the fear of our enemies being taken away, the times through Thy protection may be peaceful.*"

Now, dear children, you understand where peace is to be found—in the observance of God's commandments, without which, whatever pleasures, amusements, riches even, there may be, there is no peace. So far I have spoken of the peace which every good Catholic possesses. I will only say a few words about that sublime and perfect peace which belongs to those who not only live in God's grace, but keep their hearts raised far above all hopes, and fears, and interests of this world. Where does it specially flourish? Surely in that admirable religious Order (founded seven hundred years before that of my own holy Father, St. Dominic) the motto of which is "*Pax*," in those calm, cool, spiritual vales of Benedictine tranquillity, copiously watered by streams of Heavenly grace, enlivened by the triumphant songs of the Divine Office, where the continual remembrance of fifteen centuries of glorious ancestors, like a vast plantation of venerable trees, deadens the sound of the twentieth-century kicking and yelling beyond. You may say, "Does this writer of letters expect us all to rush into monasteries?" No such thing. But I want

to teach you to appreciate Catholic loveliness, and to save you from the contempt for the beautiful things of the past, and what remains of them, which seems to be one of the characteristics, at least of the worldly side, of this century. It seems unable to believe that anything was good when there was no electricity, no motors, not even steam and gas. This spirit seems to have crept somewhat into the education of the young, of girls especially, at least into English education, so that the history of England alone seems necessary. Certainly the British Empire is great—the old Roman Empire had only one-sixth of its extent—but, on the other hand, we must remember this comprised all the parts of the world civilized at that time, when such vast portions were still undiscovered.

I am wandering from my subject, and that is useless. It is said that history can always be read after school-days are over. Strictly speaking, it can, but where is the taste for it to be acquired? A most exceptional prodigy would that boy or girl of seventeen be who, when set free from school thraldom, should find pleasure in studying the wars of the ancient Greeks or Romans, the inroads of the barbarians, the struggles to drive the Moors out of Europe, or the comparatively modern wars of Wellington and Napoleon. This awful twentieth century would not leave them the time, even if they had the taste. It is all for commotion and locomotion, though we

find these words in the Old Testament: "*Non in commotione Dominus.*" This short quotation from a discourse on the "Benedictine Spirit," by the great Cardinal Newman, will explain better than I can this sublime peace: "*Neither hope nor fear of anything here below: daily prayer, daily work, daily bread; each day exactly like the one before, except that each is one day nearer to the day of days, the day that will swallow up all days, the day of everlasting rest.*"

Besides the indispensable peace, the state of grace or friendship with God, and the sublime peace of which the Benedictine spirit is the highest expression, there is another most desirable peace of which I must say a few words. It is the state of peace between the nations of the earth, the advantages of which will be best understood by a glance at the woes caused by the contrary state, war. You have a vague, incomplete idea of them from what you have read, but the reality far surpasses in horror any imaginations of your mind or mine. If you read the history of one single campaign, Napoleon's invasion of Russia, or only two items of it—the passage of the River Beresina and the burning of Moscow—you will see these woes more vividly and correctly. Remember, too, the great number of modern inventions not then made use of in warfare, and you will begin to understand the awful consequences of a great European war at the present day. You should remember this at Mass

and Communion, and in all your prayers, especially when you are told that such a war might bring its horrors to our own homes in these colonies belonging to European nations. Oh ! that day and night a mighty chorus from millions of Catholic hearts might, in union with the omnipotent sacrifice of Holy Mass, rise up to the throne of God in these words of the Office : " *Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris* " (Give peace, O Lord, in our days). Prayer is all-powerful. " *A vast explosion of prayer,*" as Leo XIII. called it, when speaking of the universal recitation of the Rosary, can change the face of the world, by obtaining wonders from the mercy of Almighty God.

Ever yours devotedly,
A. Z.

XLIII

Answers for Non-Catholics—II

My dear Children,

We must not forget our answers for non-Catholics ; I can spare a letter to prepare you for them to-day. I was once in a store in Frederick Street, when an animated discussion took place between the merchant who owned it, and a lady who maintained that she had paid ready-money for some items charged to her. At last the master of the store exclaimed : " I suppose I am to consider that Mrs. —— cannot possibly make a mistake—that she is *immaculate*." He made a great mistake himself when he used this word, and so does a non-Catholic when he says to us : " You maintain that your Popes are *infallible*, and yet I have read that there have been some bad Popes." I have read in my dictionary that *infallible* means incapable of error, and *impeccable* means incapable of sin. I do assert that, on certain occasions (which I will explain to you), the Pope is *infallible*, but never under any conditions *impeccable*. He is infallible only when he teaches *ex cathedra*—that is, when, as Supreme Pastor and Teacher of the whole Church, he de-

fines any doctrine of faith or morals as true, or condemns any as false. We read in St. Luke (xxii. 32) that Our Lord said to St. Peter, in the presence of the other Apostles: "*Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you* [all], *that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee* [Simon Peter alone], *that thy faith fail not; and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren.*" You see that the grace of not failing in faith was for St. Peter specially. As Our Saviour did not found His Church merely for one generation of men, those that lived at that time, it is clear that whatever for the good of souls He promised to St. Peter, He intended to give to all St. Peter's lawful successors; otherwise how could He continue to be with His Church "*all days, even unto the consummation of the world*"?

Now, what about *impeccable?* The Pope is not impeccable. The Apostles were not impeccable. St. Peter denied his Divine Master, and Judas was one of them. Jesus Christ did not found a Church composed of Angels confirmed in grace, but of weak men. There have been some queer Popes (just a few), Bishops and Priests, monks and friars. Among the latter, Mr. Non-Catholic, is a great friend of yours; you surely do not call Mr. Martin Luther *a good friar!* But in all these you must consider two things—the office and the man. You must respect the sacred office, even when you are plainly bound to condemn the bad actions of the man. Our Blessed Lord Himself gave us

an example of this. I do not remember reading in the Gospel of His speaking with harshness and severity of anyone except the Scribes and Pharisees, the teachers of the Jews; yet, referring to them, He said: "*The Scribes and Pharisees have sat in the chair of Moses* [succeeded Moses as teachers]. *All things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works do ye not: for they say, and do not*" (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3). Could anything be more clear? You must listen to their teaching, but not imitate their bad example.

Another thing non-Catholics sometimes say is this: "You Catholics get now and then new articles of faith imposed upon you, such as the Immaculate Conception in 1854, and the Papal Infallibility in 1870." Not a bit of it, as I will explain to you. But to think of Mr. Protestant, of all men in the world, talking about new articles of faith! Even as far back as the time of that highly moral (?), truthful (?), and not at all changing (?) exemplary Archbishop of his (Thomas Cranmer), Joan Bocher, about to be burnt as a heretic, addressed her judges on this subject of change of doctrine in words that must have made them blush. "It is a goodly matter," she said, "to consider your ignorance. Not long ago you burnt Anne Askew, and yet came yourselves to profess the very doctrine for which you burnt her; and now you burn me for mine, which in the end you will believe also, when you have under-

stood the Scriptures." This poor woman, in these last words, showed unconsciously the cause of the ever changing of Protestant doctrines, the allowing each person to understand for himself the Scriptures.

Now, what about the "new articles of faith" that non-Catholics reproach us with? We have simply to answer that they are not *new*, that they have always existed, and have been believed without the *command* and threat of excommunication as heretics if we reject them which the Holy Church, guided by the Holy Ghost, sees fit at certain times to pronounce concerning such or such articles of belief. It happens in all families that children and servants know very well the will of the head of the family concerning certain details in the house, though he cannot treat them with severity if they go against it, till he has spoken emphatically to them about it and has *defined* precisely his will in the matter. I might fill pages with quotations to prove that the most ancient Fathers of the Church taught the Immaculate Conception, but it is not necessary: what is necessary is to prove that we have to submit to the guidance of the one true living Church founded by Christ. As to each one interpreting the Bible, St. Augustine, though so great a scholar, and a Doctor of the Church, found it often so obscure that he confessed that "*the things in it which he did not understand were more numerous than those that he did.*" If the great St. Augustine

said that, what about every man, woman, and child? St. Jerome also said: "*A wrong sense turns the word of God into the word of man, and, what is worse, into the word of the devil; for the devil himself could quote the text of Scripture, and he did so when he tempted Our Lord in the desert.*"

I am sure you will be astonished when I tell you that Cardinal Hosius, as far back as the sixteenth century, enumerated as many as 270 sects of Protestants, the immediate fruit of each man explaining the Bible for himself.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XLIV

All Saints

My dear Children,

Holy Church calls on us this week to celebrate with special fervour the triumphant and consoling Feast of All Saints. Comparatively few of the blessed in Heaven are canonized or beatified. Of these a small number have their feasts celebrated all over the world, and by far the larger number are only commemorated in their native land, or in the religious Order to which they belonged. All those who have reached Heaven are Saints, but myriads of them are unknown. This feast was instituted to honour these. Thousands of those who gave their life for Christ during the first three centuries of the Church, in the persecutions of the Roman Emperors, were also unknown by name, and were not commemorated. It was for this reason that about three years and a half after the death of Pope St. Gregory the Great (who sent St. Augustine to convert the English), when Pope Boniface IV. in 607 purified and consecrated the Pantheon, or temple of all the heathen gods, he dedicated it in honour of the Blessed Virgin and all the martyrs, whence it was called "*Sancta*

Maria ad Martyres." Pope Gregory III., about 731, consecrated a chapel in St. Peter's Basilica in honour of all the Saints. Gregory IV., visiting France in the reign of Louis le Débonnaire, 837, exceedingly propagated the Festival of All Saints.

This feast calls upon us first to praise and thank God, by Whose freely bestowed grace, together with the co-operation of their free-will, the Saints have reached their eternal reward ; secondly, to honour and invoke them in order to obtain their patronage and their intercession ; thirdly, to study the examples of their lives, that we may to some extent model our own on theirs.

I wonder what answer you would make if you were asked to give your idea of a Saint ? I am pretty sure some would say that his or her life was one of almost uninterrupted prayer and meditation. What a mistake you would make ! If this were a true definition, there would either be no canonized Saints outside the cloister, or the Church would be one vast monastery of contemplative religious. Now pay attention to *my* definition : a Saint is one who seeks continually to do the will of God, by performing as perfectly as possible the duties of the state of life in which God has placed him or her. There are Saints, both canonized and uncanonized ones, in every possible position in life. Setting aside those who attained perfection in the ecclesiastical or the religious vocation, I will prove this by naming a

few who sanctified themselves in the world. We have St. Edward of England, St. Margaret of Scotland, St. Louis of France, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and her niece, St. Elizabeth of Portugal, who served God as Kings and Queens, and (except St. Edward) were parents of families; Saints Sebastian and Maurice, soldiers; Blessed Jane of Valois, an ill-used and repudiated wife; St. Crispin, a shoemaker; St. Genevieve, a shepherdess; St. Isidore, a field-labourer; St. Zita, a maid-servant; St. Benedict Joseph Labre, a beggar. Prayer is certainly the holiest occupation, and a necessary means of obtaining God's grace; but to pass a considerable time in actual prayer is a real fault when it interferes with the duties of one's state of life. A true story will explain this.

Henry III., who was King of England while St. Louis IX. reigned in France, was not an impious monster like King John, his father, but his piety was of quite the wrong sort. While he rebuilt Westminster Abbey, where the remains of St. Edward reposed (and still repose), the Confessor's good laws were disregarded and the national liberties violated by his wicked favourites, so that St. Edmund, like his predecessor St. Thomas à Becket, was forced to retire to Pontigny. On one occasion St. Louis of France and Henry III. had agreed to meet, to confer together on State business. Henry kept the King of France waiting while he heard three Masses. Louis, the Saint,

understood piety better, and could not help remarking that the King of England would have done better to hear one Mass and come at the appointed hour to perform his kingly duty.

It is an excellent thing to say the Rosary, but a child at school who should say it during the time fixed for study or composition would commit a fault. Much more excellent is the assisting at daily Mass, but the wife and mother who should leave her husband grumbling for his coffee, and her children's toilette neglected, to go to Mass, would also be omitting her duty. Of course I am not speaking of Mass on Sundays and days of obligation. With regard to that, she must be inexorable, firm as a rock, from the very beginning of her married life. Woe to the Catholic wife who once begins to omit Sunday Mass, for fear of annoying or inconveniencing her non-Catholic or bad Catholic husband! He will expect her to neglect this duty over and over again, till at last she becomes so careless that she hardly bestirs herself for Sunday Mass when he is away from home. When she has children, it will be impossible to impress them with the gravity of an obligation of which she makes so light herself, and her servants, whom she is bound to send to Mass if they live in the house, run a poor chance. Neither husband's grumbling nor attention to non-Catholic visitors may be taken into consideration. If Sunday Mass goes, Easter

duties will soon follow, and what will she be then? She may be well dressed, amiable, smiling, apparently happy; but in the eyes of God and His angels, and of faithful Catholics also, she will be like a dressed-up corpse. There may be a hurried reception of Sacraments before death, and we sincerely hope there will be sufficient good dispositions; but as I once heard it said in a sermon on death-bed repentance, "the priest can bring Sacraments, but can he bring dispositions?"

This mentioning of Sunday Mass seems to have carried us far away from the subject of this letter, but it is one of great importance in the saving of our souls or our becoming Saints; for all those who reach Heaven are Saints, and all who do not, sooner or later, are damned for all eternity.

I will begin another subject, of great importance in the saving of your souls, by asking each of you a question: "Would you, as you certainly do not wish to drown yourself, undertake to walk up and down every day for an hour on the very edge of the wharf?" You will answer me: "Certainly not, for I might so easily slip into the sea, and I cannot swim." Now, there are some people who run this risk spiritually by making up their minds to commit any and every venial sin that may come in their way. It is true that a thousand venial sins cannot make a mortal sin, for they are of a different nature; but continual deliberate venial sins weaken and blind the soul so much

that it falls almost without hesitation into mortal sin. God does not expect of you the heroic deeds of His great Saints, but you will certainly have some trials to bear, some sacrifices to make, very easy indeed compared with theirs.

If you do your best to please God in easy things, He will certainly give you His powerful grace when He requires difficult ones. Perhaps some of you may misunderstand what I have said above about prayer, and find that it contradicts the text, "Pray without ceasing," which you have read or heard. I should have explained to you that "*Laborare est orare*" (*To work is to pray*); and if we cannot go to daily Mass or perform some other act of devotion as often as we wish, we can always have the merit of going to Mass and reap the same graces as those who are able to go, by saying in our heart: "O my God, I should like so much to go to Mass, but my duties keep me at home; I offer them in union with Holy Mass, in loving submission to Thy will." In this way both ends will be attained.

The day after All Saints is the Commemoration of All Souls. On account of having been colonized by Spain, Trinidad enjoys the privilege granted to that country of having three requiem Masses offered up by each priest on that day. If you can possibly do so, assist at the three, offering also Holy Communion for the holy souls suffering in Purgatory. The whole month

is dedicated to prayer for them. Could you not say every day the greatly indulgenced six *Paters*, *Aves*, and *Glorias* of the Blue Scapular for the Pope's intentions, in order to relieve them? The subject of my next letter will be Purgatory.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XLV

Purgatory

My dear Children,

Before writing, as I promised, about Purgatory, I wish to point out a few errors often met with, chiefly due to misunderstood pictures. Some persons, having seen God the Father represented as a venerable old man, will not believe one who tells them that He has not, and never has had, a body. They make a similar mistake when they maintain that souls and bodies are together in Purgatory. That comes from forgetting the plain fact that no one can portray a spirit. In the case of God the Father, of Angels, and of souls in Purgatory, if they are to be represented at all, it must be by lending them, so to speak, the appearance of a body. If the bodies were not in the grave, but in Purgatory, the Church would not always speak of souls in Purgatory, but of men, women, or persons suffering there. With regard to pictures of Heaven or Hell, there is this difference: that though no bodies are there now, with the exception of those of Our Lord and of His Blessed Mother, in Heaven, after the resurrection at the last day our bodies will be

reunited to our souls, thereby increasing the happiness of the good and the pains of the wicked, and Purgatory will have ceased to exist. The words " resurrection of the body " bring to mind another mistake also caused by pictures intended to assist teachers in explaining Christian doctrine. We are told that the bodies of the just will rise bright and glorious, in a state and at an age of perfection, and, moreover, endowed with wonderful qualities, as you have learned in your " Explanatory Catechism." Well, how can this be conveyed to the minds of children by a picture that shows them a chubby babe rising out of the grave not far from a venerable old man holding his crutch ? Can either of these represent a human being in a state of perfection—nay, a more than ordinary perfection, glorious and endowed with wonderful qualities ? It is some time since I looked at an engraving of Fra Angelico's " Last Judgment," but I am sure *he* made no such blunder.

Now let us turn to the subject of Purgatory, which is the state of those souls that, not having satisfied God's justice as to the temporal punishment for mortal sins forgiven or for venial sin, have to endure, for a short, or, more often, a very long time after death inconceivable pain—called fire because it is so intense, but created by God to burn souls, for bodies do not go to Purgatory. Non-Catholics, with few exceptions, reject belief in what they consider a

most cruel doctrine ; whilst well-informed Catholics can but see in it a most merciful contrivance of God's love for us. The former say of their departed ones, " gone to rest," or " gone to glory," even when their lives have been, according to their own ideas of right and wrong, full of sins. How can this be reconciled with the plain words of Scripture, " *He shall be saved, yet so as by fire* " (1 Cor. iii. 15) ? They are also accustomed to produce these words of Ecclesiastes (xi. 3) : " *If the tree fall to the south, or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be,*" as disproving the existence of Purgatory. They do not in the least disprove it ; the sentence of the particular judgment remains unchanged, though, in the case of almost all who die in a state of grace, the enjoyment of the reward is delayed, while the inconceivably ardent, though spiritual, fire of Purgatory purifies the soul, like gold in a furnace, from the flaws left in it by sin.

I have provided you with an answer for non-Catholics ; now let us consider Purgatory for our own practical good, putting ourselves under the guidance of St. Catherine of Genoa, who is considered quite a theologian on this subject, her treatise on Purgatory having been examined and approved at the time of her canonization. Read carefully what she says : " Of how much importance Purgatory is no tongue can tell, no mind conceive. As far as I see, its pain is almost as if it were that of hell, and yet I see also that the

soul, which perceives in itself the least atom of imperfection, would rather throw itself into a thousand hells than find itself in the presence of the Divine Majesty of God with that defect upon it, and therefore, seeing Purgatory to be ordained for the taking away of these flaws, it plunges into it, and seems to find it an invention of no little mercy. . . . The pain of the loss of God in Purgatory is a pain so extreme that no tongue can tell it."

The pain of sense the Saint likens to the burning of gold in the crucible: "God holds it in the fire till every imperfection is consumed." Towards the end of her treatise she exclaims: "Oh! that I could cry so loud that I might frighten all the men who dwell upon the earth, and say to them: 'O miserable men, why have you let yourselves be so blinded by this world as not to make any provision for that imperious necessity which you will find at the moment of death? You, all of you, shelter yourselves under the hope of God's mercy. But you do not see that the very goodness of God will rise up in judgment against you for having rebelled against the will of so good a Lord? Do not lull yourselves into a false confidence by saying: When I come to die I will make a good Confession, and then I will gain the plenary indulgence, and thus, in that last moment, I shall be cleansed from all my sins, and so I shall be saved. Think a little. Confession and contrition are necessary for a

plenary indulgence ; and contrition is such a hard thing to get that, if you knew how hard, you would tremble for very fear, and you would be much more likely to believe that such a grace would never be given you than to expect it with such confidence as you do now."

Now, as to duration of punishment and seeming length through extremity of pain, there are instances, Father Faber tells us, in the chronicles of the Franciscans, the Life of St. Francis Jerome, and elsewhere, of souls appearing an hour or two after death and thinking they had been years in Purgatory. Such may be the Purgatory of those who are caught up to meet the Lord on the last day. In the revelations of Sister Francesca of Pampeluna, we find, among hundreds of cases, that by far the greater number suffered thirty, forty, or sixty years. A holy Bishop, for some negligence in his office, had been in Purgatory fifty-nine years before he appeared to the servant of God ; a gentleman, fifty-nine years for worldliness ; another, sixty-four for excessive fondness for playing at cards for money ; another, thirty-five years for worldliness. We are apt to leave off too soon praying for our friends, imagining that they are freed from Purgatory (says Father Faber) much sooner than they really are. If Sister Francesca beheld the souls of many fervent Carmelites, some of whom had worked miracles in their lifetime, still in Purgatory ten, twenty, thirty, sixty years after death, and not

near their deliverance, what must become of us and ours !

The utter helplessness of the holy souls calls on us to assist them. " They cannot do penance ; they cannot satisfy ; they cannot gain indulgences ; they have no Sacraments ; they are not under the jurisdiction of God's Vicar, overflowing with the plenitude of means of grace and manifold benedictions. They are a portion of the Church without priesthood or altar at their command." So says Father Faber.

How frequent reflection on Purgatory would change our own lives ! How it would transform our duties, our prayers, our reception of the Sacraments ! How earnestly we should beg for contrition ! Our Lord has tied His hands ; He *cannot* help the souls in Purgatory. He looks to us to enable Him to shorten their pains. Let me quote Father Faber again : " The royal devotion of the Church is the works of mercy ; and see how they are all satisfied in this devotion for the dead ! It feeds the hungry souls with Jesus, the Bread of Angels. It gives them to drink, in their incomparable thirst, His precious blood. It clothes the naked with a robe of glory. It visits the sick with mighty powers to heal, and, at the least, consoles them by the visit. It frees the captives with a heavenly and eternal freedom from a bondage more dread than death. It takes in the strangers, and Heaven is the hospice into which it receives them. It buries the dead in

the bosom of Jesus in everlasting rest. Oh, when the last doom shall come, and our dear Lord shall ask those seven questions of his judicial process, those interrogations about works of mercy, how happy will that man be—and it may be the poorest beggar amongst us, who never gave an alms, because he lived on alms himself—who shall hear his own defence sweetly and eloquently taken up by crowds of blessed souls, to whom he has done all these things while they waited in their prison-home of hope!" After Holy Communion and assistance at Mass, the Way of the Cross, the six *Paters*, *Aves*, and *Glorias* of the Blue Scapular, and the Holy Rosary, so highly indulgenced for the dead, are the most effectual means of relieving them. The last-named devotion is also very good for our own souls if we practise it properly. Two minutes for a decade! and you may say but one each time if you like. Who cannot find two minutes of spare time five times during the day? Do you know that the bell rung at 8 p.m. is the *De Profundis* bell, and that there is an indulgence for saying kneeling when you hear it the psalm "*Out of the Depths*" and the "*Sub tuum*" (*We fly to thy patronage*) for the dead?

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XLVI

We have not here a Lasting City

My dear Children,

I know very well that many of the things I write for you are really too difficult for you at present. Never mind: read them and understand them; then put them away in your mind. They will keep, and some day, when they are wanted, you will climb up the garret steps and bring them down to your heart, and make use of them. These inspired words, "*We have not here a lasting city*," will be the subject of to-day's letter. In the very first that I wrote to you I said: "We are all travellers." This is a truth we must never forget. The true Catholic view of this life is that it is a journey to our true home, Heaven. It may be long, it may be short; but one thing is quite sure: in the same way as travellers on earthly journey bound have many inconveniences, sufferings, and privations to bear, and do not make much of them, because they are transitory, and they know that a happy, comfortable home will make amends for all, travellers on the way to Heaven must expect to suffer, and must learn to say, "Never mind, it will soon be over; it will

not matter, provided we reach Heaven." The great thing is not to make a home for ourselves at any pleasant resting-place on the road. Enjoy it a little, just to pick up your strength, and then start again to reach your real home. I forget where these lines come from, but they suit my subject admirably:

> "Few rightly estimate the worth
> Of joys that spring and fade on earth:
> They are not weeds we should despise,
> They are not flowers of Paradise,
> But wild flowers on the pilgrim's way,
> That cheer but not protract his stay,
> Which he dares not too fondly clasp,
> Lest they should perish in his grasp;
> But still may use, and rightly love,
> As types and signs of joys above."

Now, why must we suffer on our journey? First, because of original sin, Adam's sin, which brought suffering into the world. From that time to the present day, from now to the end of the world, there always have been, and always will be, sorrows to bear—not one, but many and of various kinds. It is true that, as a rule, we have not an equal amount of suffering all through our life; we have sometimes more, sometimes less. There will always be widows and orphans, always those whom we love, and who love us, carried away by death; always disappointments, poverty, sickness, persecutions, contradictions, humiliations, and many another trial hard to bear.

Secondly, we must suffer because we have sinned, and deserve to be punished; and if we accept our sufferings as a penance from God, we shall have much less Purgatory.

Thirdly, we must suffer in order to lay up treasures that, stored in God's heavenly bank, will purchase for us more and more of the joys of eternity. Do you remember the letter for Ascension Day? I explained to you in it how to turn all your actions into gold by the means of your holy intentions uniting them with the actions of Our Blessed Lord. Always remember the painter who said, "*Eternitati pingo*," and say, like him, but in a Catholic sense, "I paint for eternity."

You see that we must suffer. Is there, then, no happiness possible on earth? There is, but you will not find it in the things of earth—

> "In the outward world it is vain to seek
> The Eden thou wouldst win:
> That ancient Paradise is gone;
> Thine Eden is within."

First of all—I must never weary of repeating it—no amassing of treasures for eternity, no peace nor happiness, no Eden within our soul, without the state of grace! The Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, used to say that he "could not understand how a person in the state of mortal sin could smile." I have read of a man who, after climbing to the top of steep rocks to steal eaglets from their nest, found that this was

situated at the bottom of a precipice, and only to be reached by his letting himself down by a long rope. He was determined to try, however, and, with the aid of his companions, succeeded in getting at the nest and carrying off the young birds. He reckoned without their terrible mother. She attacked him as he was being drawn up, and, fighting her with his large sharp knife, he accidently cut the rope almost through. He saw his danger, flung away his prey, trembling for his life. He was hanging by a thread! His companions knew it, and very, very slowly and gently they drew him up. His life was saved, but fear had turned his hair quite white. Those in mortal sin are hanging, not over a precipice, but over the awful abyss of hell, in which, in a second, they may find themselves, like the rich man of Our Lord's parable, buried for all eternity. And millions of these smile, and laugh, and feast, and make merry, not giving a thought to their danger.

After this useful digression, let me return to my subject—the way to be happy, even in this vale of tears. It is just this: to accept everything that comes as the will of God, and a means of reaching Heaven. A true story will explain this to you. That devout Dominican, the Venerable John Thauler of Cologne, leaving a church, where he had just been asking God to show him how he could serve Him perfectly, met a beggar sitting on the steps. The poor man had lost an arm and a leg, was covered with sores,

and was hungry, and clothed in rags. "Good day, friend," said the Father. "I have never had a bad one," was his answer. "I wish you better health and more prosperous circumstances." "I am always well, and have nothing to complain of." "Surely," said Thauler to himself, "this poor man is either deaf or mad!" Raising his voice, he repeated: "You do not hear me; I wish you a good day." "I do understand you. I repeat that all my days are good days." Then he explained that from his childhood he had suffered in various ways, but was always quite happy, because he believed that God loved him, and knew what was best for him, and would reward him in Heaven. John Thauler embraced the beggar with tears, and returned to the church to thank God for showing him in what perfection consists. The better you serve God, the happier you will be.

St. Francis of Assisi, having declared to one of his brethren that in the riches, pleasures, and honours of this world no happiness is to be found, exclaimed: "O Fra Leone, little sheep of God, true happiness consists in seeking Him. If you always do His will; if you love Him with all your heart; if you apply yourself, above all things, to pleasing Him and following Him; if, like Him, you are meek and humble of heart; if you forgive those who offend you; if you do good to all for the love of Jesus; if your conscience is upright and pure, and your soul prepared, by a holy life, for the

happiness of Heaven—Fra Leone, my child, this is true joy, and you will be happy with true happiness."

Notice that everything I have told you in these letters will be as useful to you at seventy as at seventeen, so put all away carefully in your mind and remember it.

Ever yours devotedly,
A. Z.

XLVII

Providence

My dear Children,

You have often heard people speak about trusting in Providence, and you have a vague idea of what the word means, but a sufficiently clear and complete idea I am sure you have not; and as it is necessary you should, in order that you may be able to understand correctly the state of things in this world, I will to-day do my best to explain it to you. Providence is the fatherly care of Almighty God for the creatures He has made, especially for man, created to His own image and likeness, and called to serve Him in this life, in order, after death, to enjoy Him for all eternity. Those who affirm that God made us, and then, having cast us on this earth, takes no more interest in what becomes of us, have invented for themselves a very imperfect, powerless, and not at all beneficent sort of God.

But you may say: "If God, Who is infinitely good and infinitely powerful, cares for His creatures, and directs and manages the affairs of this world and its inhabitants, how is it that there is everywhere so much evil, such dreadful miseries

of soul and body?" I will tell you why—on account of man's free-will. God does not compel man, who is here on earth to gain Heaven by choosing of his own free-will to do what is right, to obey certain laws from which he cannot depart, as do and must the heavenly bodies, the irrational animals, and the plants. All the evils in this world come, not only from the free-will that chooses to do wrong at this present time, but from the consequences of the bad use of free-will of many who lived hundreds, and even thousands, of years ago. Take for a single example the millions of Mahometans in Asia, and the North of Africa and Egypt, with a less number in what used to be Christian Europe—all the consequence of the bad use of his free-will of the false prophet Mahomet, through which innumerable millions of souls have been deprived of the Christian Faith, of the Blessed Eucharist.

I must again remind you of what I have told you before—namely, that God gives to everyone, without exception, grace that is really sufficient to save his soul, if properly used. No one in Hell will ever be able to say that he did not, at least once, go against his conscience in a grave matter. But between this sufficient grace and the floods of grace poured on the souls of Catholics, from their Baptism to their Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction, what a contrast! Where should we be in eternity—I who am writing to you, and you who will read my letter—if we had had only

sufficient grace, when we have required Absolution to be repeated for us an innumerable number of times ?

So much for the first cause of evil, free-will. Now, what about temporal evils—those that affect, not our souls, but our worldly interests or our bodies ? They are often things which " are not what they seem "—not evils at all, but blessings in disguise, not only permitted, but even ordained for us by God for our greater good, the furthering of our eternal salvation. The Saints looked upon their sufferings in this light ; the Apostles rejoiced in their persecutions, the martyrs in their torments. I will give you a few examples. Surely you know—I trust at least a little—about that flower of Christian chivalry, that valiant Crusader, the beautiful model that Kings have long ceased to admire and to follow, St. Louis IX., King of France, when France was proud to call herself " *eldest daughter of the Church,*" and her Kings " *most Christian* " monarchs. When taken prisoner by the Saracens, he accepted his captivity joyfully, only thanking God for giving him patience, so edifying thereby the Mahometan chief that the latter begged the holy King to make him a knight. " Make yourself a Christian, and I will make you a knight," was his answer.

Look at St. Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary (more correctly, Duchess of Thuringia), that holy young widow (*she died at twenty-four*), driven from her palace after her husband's death, wan-

dering about in winter (you children of this tropical climate do not know the pains of winter) a beggar, with her four babes, hungry and shivering; reaching at last a Franciscan convent to which she had been a great benefactress, to beg the friars to sing a *Te Deum* to thank God for her destitute condition. Almighty God loved her extremely. He might have fed and warmed them by a miracle, but He was doing much grander things for her; He was making her, as her compatriots call her, "*the dear St. Elizabeth,*" the gem and model of Franciscan tertiaries. The work of God's Providence for His Church and His elect resembles a beautiful piece of embroidery, of which we do not understand the lovely intricate pattern, because we only see its wrong side.

Again, "*things are not what they seem.*" Two examples of not long ago: On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1863, a disaster took place in Santiago de Chile (in Spanish), a town on the Pacific coast of South America, which sent a shudder through every land that heard of it. There had been a retreat for ladies in the church (I think) of the Jesuits. For the closing service, on the evening of the feast, it was decorated with numbers of pitch-oil lamps, hung very high up, between which were draperies of some light material. The latter caught fire. The crowding of the ladies towards the doors—as these, every one of them, *opened inwards*—most securely shut

them ; and the windows were placed so far from the ground that, though they were open, there was no means of reaching them. It was awful ! Eight hundred ladies, members of all the best families in the town, burned alive ! No possibility of rescuing them. But "*things are not what they seem.*" They had approached the Sacraments after a week of serious preparation, and were probably better prepared to die than they would be later. We must expect, too, that God mercifully sent to them a special grace in that awful moment. I have read a poem, by a Catholic West Indian, in which the loss of life was compared to that caused by the "Car of Juggernaut" in India, or the human sacrifices of Dahomey, in West Africa. In the eyes of God we may hope it was a harvest for Heaven.

Similar was the case in the destruction by fire of the *Bazar de Charité*, in Paris, on May 4, 1897, but the lives lost were less—only about 120. The pious ladies who conducted it were performing an act of charity ; they were likely to be in a state of grace. One of them, the Duchesse d'Alençon, a Dominican tertiary, heroically refused to save her life when there was a chance, and she was urged to do so, saying : "No, I will let all the visitors pass out first." It was a heart-rending event : in several cases families lost more than one member. One gentleman lost his wife and both his daughters. In the eyes of God, was it so awful ? I think not.

On the other hand, while we shudder and sigh on reading of such occurrences, we forget that something more awful is taking place every hour of the day and night—souls are falling into Hell for all eternity. Almighty God ardently willed their salvation, our Saviour suffered and died for them, but there are rules of His Providence that He cannot alter. When you think of this, pray for the conversion of sinners. (There are great indulgences for saying fifteen " Our Fathers " and " Hail Marys " for this intention.) Never say now, " What is the good of the cloistered nuns ?" They are always consoling Our Lord by giving Him, by their prayers, the right, so to speak, to break His usual laws, and give exceptional graces that save hardened sinners.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

XLVIII

Advent

My dear Children,

I wish you a happy New Year, as this letter will reach you just in time for New Year's Day. Do not contradict me: I do not generally say a thing, certainly I do not write, still less print, a thing of which I am not sure. Look at your Missals, or at the Epistles and Gospels at the end of your Prayer-Books. Which is the first day mentioned? Is it not the First Sunday of Advent? When I have explained it to you, you will come to consider it one of the happiest, greatest, and most beautiful of Sundays. It brings to our minds two things: the first silvery glimmer of dawn behind the eastern hills, when God consoled our first parents, in the dark sorrow that overwhelmed them at their awful loss, by the promise of a Redeemer, and also the preparation we must make for His spiritual birth in our souls at Christmas; and to assist us in this, Holy Church puts before us the words of St. John the Baptist, the precursor of the Messias, whose mission was to prepare the Jews for His coming. You cannot pay attention to what I am saying so long as you

are asking yourselves : " What, then, is the First of January ?" It is the Feast of Our Lord's Circumcision, but, as far as being New Year's Day goes, from a Catholic point of view it is an intruder, a usurper, a Tichborne Claimant, and it is so conceited that it tries (and with many succeeds) to eclipse the jubilant loveliness of Christmas Day. No, no, Mr. First of January, you won't take *me* in : *I* enjoyed my New Year's Day weeks ago, and in a very numerous and goodly company. His Holiness the Pope, all the Cardinals, Bishops, priests, monks, friars, religious of both sexes, and many well-instructed Catholics, enjoyed it with me. I have nothing to say to you. No, Mr. First of January, do not call upon me. Pass on to your friends ; I am not one of them.

I have told you before that it is right and profitable during each great season of the Ecclesiastical Year to say each day (*minimum sed constans*) some short prayer, to keep before your mind the spirit of the season. Now, in that part of the Breviary for the joyful, penitential season of Advent, are to be found some gems of prayer—the short but beautiful antiphons, from December 17 to December 23 inclusive, that are called " the great O's." I think them so lovely and so appropriate that I will copy them for you, advising you to say them, as your special Advent prayers, every day, beginning on the First Sunday. They are these :

" *O Wisdom,* Who didst proceed from the mouth

of the Most High, reaching from end to end, with strength and sweetness disposing everything, come and teach us the way of prudence.

"*O Adonaï*, Leader of the House of Israel, Who didst appear to Moses in a ruddy flame of fire, and on Sinaï didst give Thy law, come and redeem us with outstretched arm.

"*O Root of Jesse*, Who standest as a sign to the nations, over whom Kings held their tongue, Whom the nations despised, come and deliver us; delay no longer.

"*O Key of David*, and sceptre of the house of Israel, Who openest, and no one shutteth, Who shuttest, and no one openeth, come and deliver from prison the captives who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

"*O Dawn of Day*, Splendour of Eternal Light, and Sun of Justice, come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

O King of the Nations, and their desired One, Corner-stone, Who makest both into one, come and save man, whom of clay Thou didst form.

"*O Emmanuel*, our King and our Law-giver, the expected of nations, and their Saviour, come and save us, O Lord our God."

I suppose you remember that the four weeks of Advent represent the four thousand years during which the Redeemer, the Messias, was promised, prefigured, and announced by the prophets. He was called the Desired of the Everlasting Hills, the Prince of Peace, the Holy

One of Israel. His faithful servants (in the Old Testament) raised their hands to Heaven, and, with the great prophet Isaias, prayed: "*Send forth, O Lord, the Lamb, the Ruler of the earth.*"

It was a time of expectation, and Solomon tells us that "*hope deferred maketh the heart sick.*" Generation after generation passed away, but the earth had not yet "*opened to bud forth a Saviour.*" Prophet after prophet was on his high tower, looking out for Him through the thick nights, and watching for Him to burst forth from behind the hills; while all the world cried out: "*Oh, that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down!*"

But Advent is not only figurative; it should be a time of serious and fervent preparation for the spiritual birth of Christ in our souls by Holy Communion on Christmas morning.

We must listen to St. John the Baptist saying to us: "*Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand.*" Put away everything that displeases God, even that which does not amount to mortal sin. Again, he says: "*Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit* [good works] *shall be cut down and cast into the fire,*" and "*Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight His path.*"

During the last week, when Christmas is drawing very near, think of the journey of Our Lady and St. Joseph from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem, the City of David, to obey the orders of the Roman Cæsar; remember how the doors were closed against them, and how thousands of

hearts, even of those who are baptized Catholics, are closed against them now. Not *yours*, I am sure. You will pass so well this Advent season that on Christmas Day the Holy Infant will shower on you and yours His choicest and most abundant blessings.

Ever yours devotedly,
A. Z.

XLIX

Figures of the Blessed Virgin

My dear Children,

Between the first pale silvery glimmer of dawn, of which I spoke in my last letter—God's first promise of a Redeemer, when He said to the devil, under the form of a serpent, *Of the daughters of Eve, one "shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel"*—and the dazzling brightness of the accomplishment of this promise, by the Immaculate Conception of her who was to be the Mother of the promised Saviour, there was an interval of nearly four thousand years, the time of the Old Testament. There are many figures of Our Lady, as well as of her Divine Son, and it seems very fitting to speak to you of them before this great festival. *Eve*, the mother of all according to the flesh, is the first figure of her who is the Mother of all according to grace; and Eve mourning over the lifeless body of Abel, slain by his own brother, is the figure of the Mother of Christ receiving in her arms the body of her Divine Son, slain by the Jews, His brethren.

St. Alphonsus tells us that *Noah's Ark* was a

true figure of Mary ; for as in it all kinds of beasts were saved, so under her mantle sinners, who by their vices are like unto beasts, find refuge ; but with this difference, another pious author remarks, that, while the brutes in the Ark remained brutes, under the mantle of Mary the wolf and the tiger are changed into lambs. One day St. Gertrude saw Our Lady with her mantle open, and under it were leopards, lions, and bears ; and she saw that this Blessed Mother did not drive them away, but caressed them with her benign hand. The Saint understood that these were miserable sinners, who are welcomed by her with sweetness and love as soon as, with the will to leave off sinning, they have recourse to her.

Our Lady was also prefigured by the *dove* which returned to Noah in the Ark with an olive-branch in its beak as a pledge of the peace which God granted to men. St. Bonaventure thus addresses her : " Thou art that most faithful dove ; thou art a sure mediatrix between God and the world, lost in a spiritual deluge ; thou, by presenting thyself before God, hast obtained for a lost world peace and salvation." Wherefore Blessed Albert the Great, O.P., makes her say : " I am that *dove of Noah* which brought universal peace to the Church." The *rainbow* seen by St. John was an express figure of Mary : " And there was a rainbow round about the throne." St. Bernardine of Siena says that it was of this rainbow

that God spoke when He promised Noah that He would place it in the clouds as a sign of peace. "Mary," says the Saint, "is this bow of eternal peace, for as God, on seeing it, remembers the peace promised to the earth, so does He, at the prayers of Mary, forgive the crimes of sinners, and confirm His peace with them."

St. Antoninus, O.P., says that *Rebecca*, when she said to Jacob, "Bring me two kids, that I may make of them meat for thy father, such as he gladly eateth," was a figure of Mary. She commands the angels to bring to her sinners (the kids), that, by obtaining for them sorrow and purpose of amendment, she may render them acceptable to Our Lord. *Rebecca* was also a figure of Our Lady when she said to Abraham's servant, "*I will draw water for thy camels also.*" On these words St. Bernard exclaims: "O Mary, thou art more compassionate than Rebecca! Not satisfied with giving thy treasures to the just, thou bestowest them on sinners, signified by the camels."

Miriam (Hebrew word for Mary), the sister of Moses and Aaron, who bore Our Lady's name, is also looked upon as one who prefigured her. When the women followed her with music and dances to give thanks to the Lord, she began the song for them, saying, "*Let us sing to the Lord, for He is gloriously magnified,*" etc., as is related in Exodus. "Thus does Blessed Mary eternally lead the choir. She begins the song by

intoning the *Magnificat.*" Is it without meaning that God says that He sent Moses and Aaron *and Miriam* (or Mary) to lead His people out of Egypt? Moses and Aaron represented Our Lord as Prophet, Priest, and Saviour; and has not Mary been chosen by God to be our deliverer, to save us from our enemy, and crush the head of the serpent? *The bush that Moses saw,* which burned without being consumed, in which God was present, and from which He spoke, is a figure of the Virgin Mother of God, whose purity shines bright as the fire, and in whom God was present, as in the bush. In the Vespers of the Circumcision the Church says: "*The bush which Moses saw unconsumed we confess to be thy glorious virginity.*"

The *stupendous pillar* by which God guided His people through the desert to the promised land, "*a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night,*" is, says Richard of St. Laurence, a figure of Mary, who, as a cloud, protects us from the ardour of Divine justice, and as a fire protects us from the devils.

The *Ark of the Covenant,* by which victories were gained for the Israelites, is another figure of Our Blessed Lady. Thus was Jericho conquered, and thus the Philistines, "*for the Ark of God was there.*" As manna was in the Ark, so is Jesus, of Whom the manna was a figure, in Mary, and by means of this Ark we gain the victory over our earthly and our infernal enemies

In the Book of Exodus we read that God commanded Moses to place over the Ark of the Covenant a *mercy-seat* of the purest gold, whence He would speak to him. St. Andrew of Crete says that the whole world embraces Mary as this mercy-seat. Commenting on his words, another author exclaims : " Thou, O Mary, art the mercy-seat of the world. From thee does our compassionate Lord speak to our hearts ; from thee He speaks words of pardon and mercy ; from thee He bestows His gifts ; from thee all good flows forth to us." In Judæa there were *cities of refuge*, to which criminals might flee and escape punishment. " I am the city of refuge," says St. John Damascene, speaking in the name of our heavenly Queen, " to all who fly to me."

The *fleece of Gideon*, which was wet with dew when all the ground was dry, and dry when all the ground was wet, is also referred to as a type of the Blessed Virgin in the Vespers of the Circumcision : " *When Thou wast born, in an unspeakable manner, from a Virgin, the Scriptures were fulfilled : Thou camest down as the dew on to the fleece.*" We read in the Bible that Booz allowed *Ruth* to gather the ears of corn after the reapers. St. Bonaventure says that, " as Ruth found favour with Booz, Mary found favour with God, and is allowed to gather the ears of corn after the reapers." These are the Evangelical labourers—missionaries, preachers, and confessors, who are constantly reaping souls for Christ. To Mary

alone is it granted to save some hardened and rebellious souls which are abandoned by them. The same Saint remarks that the name of Ruth signifies "seeing and hastening," and Mary, seeing our miseries, hastens to help us. It is St. Bonaventure also who calls Our Lady "*the wise Abigail.*" This is the woman who succeeded, by her beautiful supplications, in appeasing King David when he was indignant against Nabal, her husband, who had insulted him—indeed, he was so far appeased as to bless her for having kept him from avenging himself. This is what Mary does in Heaven in favour of sinners: she knows so well how to appease the Divine justice that God blesses her for it, and thanks her for having withheld Him from chastising them as they deserved.

Anna, the mother of the young Tobias, mourning for the absence of her son, and anxiously counting the days for his return, prefigures the sorrow of Mary for the loss of her Son Jesus, when He remained away from her in the temple for three days. *Judith* is one of the principal types of the Mother of God. Judith offered herself up to the Divine will to accomplish the deliverance of her people. The first prophecy said of the Blessed Virgin that she should crush the serpent's head. Judith cut off the head of Holophernes, the enemy of her people, who had caused so many of them to be put to the sword. The Blessed Mary, by her Divine Son, has crushed

the head of the devil, who, having rebelled against the Most High, now seeks to draw every living soul with him into eternal perdition.

Queen Esther, pleading for the life of her people, is a type of the Blessed Mother of God interceding for us with the King of Heaven, her Divine Son. "*Who knoweth that thou art not therefore come to the kingdom that thou mightest be ready for such a time as this?*" said Mardochai, her uncle, to Queen Esther. The Blessed Virgin, raised to be the Queen of Heaven, obtains many gifts and graces for those who show the same faith in her intercession as Mardochai showed in the intercession of Queen Esther at the Court of Assuerus. And these words of St. John, in the Apocalypse, "*There appeared a great wonder in Heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars*," clearly refer to the Blessed Mother of God.

This letter, like that for the Assumption, has cost me much labour. I only hope that it will increase your confidence in our Mother of Mercy, and obtain a blessing for me, who have tried to make her maternal compassion better known to you.

Ever yours devotedly,

A. Z.

L

Actual Grace

My dear Children,

I have had occasion many times to speak to you of sanctifying grace, the happy state of those who, by the absence of mortal sin, are in friendship with God, and which is generally called the state of grace. To-day I want to explain to you actual grace, by which we are enabled to do good and avoid evil. God bestows it upon us when needed, and of the kind needed, if we put no obstacles in its way, and do what is necessary to obtain it. David, the royal prophet, in the first of his beautiful psalms, compares the just man to "*a tree planted near running waters, that bears its fruit in due season.*" These fertilizing waters being a figure of God's grace, how are we to be planted near to them? By constant fidelity to prayer and the holy Sacraments, and to the duties of our state of life, the conscientious performance of which Father Faber considered such a means of grace that he called it "*the eighth Sacrament.*" Notice that the tree symbolizing

the just man brings forth its fruit in due season. God does not, at all times, require the same good actions from us, and does not give His grace for them till the time comes; nor does He give the same kind of grace to all. A father who intends his son to be a doctor does not give him his surgical instruments till he is ready to use them; and one who has made up his mind that his son shall be a barrister does not procure for him surgical instruments. Another thing to remember about God's actual graces is, that He does not generally bestow very great and extraordinary graces on those who have continually wasted ordinary ones. Will a father purchase a very large cocoa estate for the son who has neglected and mismanaged a very small one?

Some of you have read "Fabiola." Every Catholic boy and girl should read it, and thus acquire in a pleasant way a knowledge of the three first centuries of the Church, those of the Roman persecutions. (It may be had at the Catholic Truth Agency for fifteen cents.) Therein, amongst other martyrs, we meet "St. Pancratius, not out of his teens, and St. Agnes, hardly in them." They were not children who had had to rough it in any way, but were tenderly nurtured only children of patrician families. How did they, you may ask, find courage to face such deaths, the former accepting the being torn to pieces by a wild beast, the latter death by fire? It is true that by a miracle the fire refused to burn St. Agnes, retiring from

her on either side, but she had accepted it—and at last her head was struck off. How had she? By the powerful grace of God. Do you think such a grace would have been given to these two youthful martyrs if they had been up to that moment disobedient, quarrelsome, deceitful, prayerless children? Certainly not. Moreover, when the moment of trial arrived, they begged unceasingly for God's grace. In the Office of St. Agnes we read: "*Beata Agnes, in medio flammarum expansis manibus, orabat*" (*Blessed Agnes, in the midst of the flames with outstretched hands, was praying*). So must we *pray* with our very last breath, for nothing is done till a good death is achieved.

We read elsewhere of forty martyrs who, having courageously confessed the faith of Christ, had been cast into a frozen pond, warm baths being provided near by for any who would change their mind. One alone amongst them, having left off begging God to strengthen him to bear his sufferings to the end, soon denied his faith by asking to be put into the warm water—in which, however, he immediately died. An executioner, vividly impressed by this manifestation of God's justice, declared himself a Christian, and, joining the thirty-nine martyrs, raised their number again to forty. On another occasion God took away from one who had confessed the faith the grace of martyrdom because he refused to be reconciled to an enemy. The latter met him on his way to execution, and humbly implored him, saying, "*Martyr of Jesus*

Christ, forgive me," but he would not, and, losing his grace, he apostatized. Another thing that you must remember is that they were strengthened by daily reception of that Bread of the Strong, the Holy Eucharist. Rather than allow her children to be deprived of this life-giving food, the Church sent the Blessed Sacrament to those who could not come to Mass, and permitted them to communicate themselves. St. Tarcisius was a holy acolyte, and was beaten to death by pagans, who tried to wrest from Him by violence the consecrated Hosts that he was carrying. Considering that the reign of our next Pope is characterized by St. Malachy as "*religio depopulata*," may we not think that our present Holy Father, when he issued his Decree about frequent and daily communion, thought it necessary to prepare brave Catholics for bad times to come? He certainly, by this decree, crushed the last remnant of life out of the sneakiest of Satan's snakes, Jansenism, which grievously misconstrued the doctrine of God's grace, and, under a cloak of extreme piety, held Catholics back from Holy Communion.

Martyrdom may not come to our country, nor in our time, but the future may hold for us some trials about which, if they were revealed to us now, we should exclaim, "I shall never be able to bear them!" And then something very like this we hear said: "Poor Mrs. ——! I remember her happy girlhood, her promising marriage, her three

brief years of prosperity, and now she has been for many a year struggling with poverty, burdened with a husband whose misfortunes have broken his strength of mind and body, and with three children to support and educate out of her own slender income. Her courage astonished everyone : when the crash came she showed such calm resignation that people said : ' Who would have thought she had it in her ?' Her Protestant brother-in-law offered to adopt and educate her boy, and she refused, and many, even among Catholics, have called her a fool of a woman for doing so."

Now, I may not know this lady by sight, but in the same way as a geologist, on digging deep into the earth, and examining the position and the kind of its various strata, can tell us of convulsions of nature that took place many centuries ago, I feel sure that I can, from what you have told me, come to many correct conclusions concerning her. The grace to practise such solid Catholic virtue did not come to her after forgetfulness of God and neglect of her Catholic duties, during the time of her happy girlhood and the three prosperous years of her early married life. I am sure she had received solid Catholic instruction ; that during the time of her happy girlhood and early married life she was faithful to her religious duties. She amused herself by reading healthy, innocent novels, but she was no reader of any that were dangerous to

faith or morals. If she had been, we should have seen in her their unfailing consequences, weakness of faith and blindness of conscience. She did not wear her heart on her sleeve, but I am certain she had had some crosses to bear even in her happy years, and with the grace she received from prayer she bore them calmly and silently. The heaviest trial must be the impossibility of a college education for her son ; but she remembers Our Lord's words, "*What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul,*" through the loss of his holy faith, incurred by a godless education? She knows that many friends look upon her as a fool of a woman, and say so, but she has read in the lesson of the Mass of a martyr in Paschal time these words, which Solomon puts into the mouths of the wicked at the last day: "*We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints*" (Wisd. v. 4, 5).

Do you think this "*valiant woman*" is unhappy? I am sure she is not. Like him of whom Longfellow writes—

> "Who through long days of labour,
> And nights devoid of ease,
> Still heard in his soul the music
> Of wonderful melodies"

—she remembers the many consoling words of Our Lord and other beautiful sayings from Holy

Writ, and she journeys on day by day towards the heavenly home that we all hope to reach, not merely peacefully, but cheerfully. Let us, in our lighter troubles, try, by God's powerful grace, to do the same.

Ever yours devotedly,
A. Z.

LI

Christmas

My dear Children,

Accept these Christmas Eve lines of Keble's as my Christmas-card :

"Wake me to-night, my mother dear,
That I may hear
The Christmas bells, so soft and clear,
To high and low glad tidings tell—
How God the Father loved us well ;
How God the Eternal Son
Came to undo what we had done ;
How God the Paraclete,
Who in the chaste womb framed the Babe so sweet,
In power and glory came the birth to aid and greet.

"Wake me that I, the twelvemonth long,
May bear the song
About with me in the world's throng ;
That treasured joys of Christmas-tide
May with mine hour of gloom abide ;
The Christmas carol ring
Deep in my heart, when I would sing ;
Each of the twelve good days
Its earnest yield of duteous love and praise,
Insuring happy months, and hallowing common ways."

If Advent Sunday sends a thrill of joy through the hearts of those who understand it rightly,

though it is only the first pale glimmer of dawn, the promise of redemption through the birth of Him for whose arrival patriarchs and prophets longed and sighed, what of Christmas, its accomplishment! I need not repeat for you the Gospel narrative. You all have the panorama of it in your minds: the wearisome journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, to obey the decree of the Roman Cæsar, and thereby effect the accomplishment of what Micheas had prophesied centuries before: "*And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come forth the Captain that shall rule my people Israel*"; the "*no room for them in the inn*"; the cave in the rock, used as a stable, become the palace of the Creator of the world; Our Lady and St. Joseph bent in silent adoration over the Divine Child; the shepherds in the distance keeping the night-watch over their flocks; the angels singing, "*Glory to God on high, and peace on earth to men of good will*," while one of them, nearer to the astonished shepherds, greets them with these words: "*Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David.*"

My practical lesson for you, dear children, I take from these words of St. Luke (ii. 7): "There

was no room for them in the inn." Children (and their elders also) are often heard to say, "I will not go to Communion on Christmas Day, because I want to enjoy myself." Now, to this objection I answer: "Did you receive your religious instruction from a sour-visaged old Jansenist, who taught you that Holy Communion and innocent merriment cannot possibly find place on the same day? Or do you wish to enjoy (?) yourself by committing mortal sin? What would you think of a child who should say, 'Father cannot dine with us on Christmas Day, because I want to enjoy myself'? Your answer would soon be forthcoming: 'You mean to say you intend grievously to misbehave yourself, and therefore you want your father to be out of the way.'" Catholic England was Merrie England, and the best Catholics, like Blessed Thomas More, who was merry on the scaffold, are the merriest, because their hearts are kept happy by the possession of God's grace. There may be plenty of pagan merriment, but there cannot be a really happy Christmas for those who, knowing what Christ's Birth and Holy Communion mean to us, do not prepare for His birth in their hearts on Christmas morning.

After all, He is the best of friends. Do you not know these words of the "Imitation of Christ": "*Without a friend thou canst not well live, and if Jesus be not thy Friend above all, thou*

wilt be exceedingly sad and desolate." None of those to whom I write will, I trust, make for themselves a pagan Christmas Day. Have you never seen these lines ?—

> " Human friends may cool and change,
> Human hearts may vary ;
> *He is faithful*, born to-day
> Of the Virgin Mary."

There is still time ; prepare at once the stable of your soul. Cleanse it by a good Confession ; trim and light the lamps of faith, hope, and charity ; warm it with some acts of kindness to the poor, and beg Our Lady, St. Joseph, and the Christmas Angels to adorn it by offering their fervour, in place of what is wanting to you ; and when the Divine Infant is born for you on Christmas morning, He will give you, together with other graces, real Christmas joy.

Do not fail to visit the crib every day of this holy season. Do you know who first made a crib to further devotion to this mystery ? The great St. Francis of Assisi (the friend of our holy Father St. Dominic), the founder of the Friars Minor, whose Order bears for its device " *Paupertas* "; and poverty is, you know, the virtue of the third joyful mystery, the Nativity—and the Franciscan spirit aims at the practice of absolute poverty, which the world considers a misfortune and a disgrace, but which is, from a *Franciscan* and *Christian* point of view, an honour

and a privilege. Let us, if we have to experience its trials, ask for patience, through the intercession of this great Saint, whom Dominicans, on account of his intimate friendship with our own Father, also love to call " our holy Father St. Francis."

Ever yours devotedly,
A. Z.

LII

Salve Regina

My dear Children,

This is the last of my letters. I have clothed them in St. Dominic's white wool, and sent them out like so many little "Friars of Mary," to do Dominican work for the souls of her children. Let us hope she will bless them.

Do you feel, when you have said the *Gloria Patri* of the fifth decade of your Rosary, that you have quite finished it? I do not; I feel that something is wanting. Where is the Dominican "*swan-song*," the end of everything Dominican, the end of our Rosary, the end of our Office, the end of our day, and the end of our life? Now, you understand me; where is our *Salve Regina?* It has never been mentioned in these letters, not because I forgot it, but because I kept it for its proper place. I have a great deal to tell you about it, and if my letter is too long I must crave forgiveness.

According to Monseigneur de Ségur, the "*Salve Regina*" is a relic of the Crusades, having been composed by a famous French warrior, Adhemar de Monteil, who, after his wars, entering on the ecclesiastical state, became Bishop of Puy, and

took part as Papal Legate in the First Crusade. The last line, "*O Clemens! O Pia! O Dulcis Virgo Maria!*" was added by that devout client of Mary and the glory of the Cistercian Order, the great St. Bernard. Finding himself at Spires, in order to take part, as Legate of Pope Innocent II., in the meeting of the German Diet in that city, he assisted at vespers in the cathedral dedicated to Our Lady. When the choir had chanted the words, "*Nobis post hoc exilium ostende,*" he, as though impelled by a sudden inspiration, sang out loud, "*O Clemens! O Pia! O dulcis Virgo Maria!*" and his pious ejaculation has been retained in the antiphon ever since.

I will avail myself of Mother Frances Raphael Drane's account of the origin of the *Salve* procession and of the Dominican love of this antiphon.

"When the great patriarch St. Dominic was called from this world to his eternal reward, he left his Order possessed of a footing in every country of Christendom. The Friars Preachers in their first fervour carried everything before them. But the graces which they enjoyed, and which rendered their labours so successful in the conversion of souls, drew on them the utmost fury of malignant spirits. At one and the same time, throughout every convent of the Order, a storm of temptations and disturbances broke out of so strange a character that none could doubt the source whence it arose. At first these trials took the form of grievous temptations, but soon

were added to these, horrible and alarming apparitions, especially in the two great Convents of Paris and Bologna, where day and night the brethren were harassed, and wellnigh driven to despair, by the incessant assaults of their infernal enemies. At length the subject was formally laid before the general Chapter, held at Paris in 1224 during the government of Blessed Jordan of Saxony, and he ordered the procession during the *Salve* to be generally practised in every convent of the Order, and this devotion has continued up to the present day. Everywhere the diabolical apparitions and disturbances ceased. The stories related of Our Lady's appearances in Dominican churches during the singing of the *Salve* are very beautiful. Some of the friars, rapt in ecstasy, saw the church crowded with angelic spirits, and Mary in their midst, and watched her as she received the salutation of the brethren, and answered it bowing her head. Once she was visible to the eyes of many standing in front of the kneeling ranks, and looking down upon them as they sang. When they came to the words, '*et spes nostra salve,*' she gravely and sweetly bowed her head, and as they sang those other words, '*Eia ergo advocata nostra,*' she turned to the altar, and, prostrating herself at her Son's feet, she implored His mercy for her children. Again, as they said, '*illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte,*' she answered their prayer by turning her soft and melting glance upon them, smiling with a joyful and

benign countenance, so that the hearts of those who saw it were filled with gladness. Then, at the last words, '*et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui nobis post hoc exilium ostende,*' she took her Divine Child into her arms, and holding Him before them, she seemed to show Him to them, as they had prayed, and so disappeared."

This same devotion of the *Salve* is connected with one of the earliest martyrdoms in the Order.

"In the year 1260 the whole of Poland suffered from the ravages of the barbarous Tartar tribes, who then formed the great terror of the Christian countries on the north-eastern frontier of Europe. There was at this time in the Convent of Friars Preachers at Sandomir a very holy prior named Sadoc (Father Sadoc Silvester's patron). One night, when the Polish chiefs left the city for the Tartar camp, the brethren had assembled in their choir as usual for Matins, at the conclusion of which one of the younger novices read aloud the martyrology for the following day. He opened the book, and doubted if he saw aright. There, in characters of glorious light, appeared the words: '*At Sandomir the passion of forty-nine Martyrs.*' His hesitation was but momentary; the words fell on the astonished ears of the brethren like a thunder-clap. Sadoc rose from his seat, and spoke to the novice: 'Is this a jest, my child? If so, it is ill-timed. What words have you just sung?' 'Father, only what I

read in the book ;' and he placed the page before the prior. The Holy Spirit revealed to Sadoc that these things were written for him and for his companions. Turning to them, as they sat in wonder, he said : ' Fathers, brothers, and dear friends, the Most High God has sent us blessed tidings to-night. Listen, my children : " At Sandomir, the passion of forty-nine Martyrs ; " who should these be but ourselves, for we make up that number ?' The next day was passed in calm and fervent preparation. Evening came at last, and the bell for Compline summoned the brethren to the choir. Sadoc's voice was heard giving the blessing : ' May Almighty God grant us a quiet night and a perfect end !' Another sang the warning words : ' Brethren, be sober and watch ; for your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour ; whom resist ye, strong in faith.' Then burst forth from the choir the solemn and magnificent chant, swelling through the aisle with more than usual power. What words were those for dying men to utter ! *' He that dwelleth in the help of the Most High, shall abide under the protection of the God of Heaven. . . . Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.'*

" Already might the Tartar war-cry be heard clear and terrible ; already, too, heavy blows were falling thick and fast on the convent gate, yet the friars seemed to take no heed. Quietly and in order they formed themselves into rank for the

procession, and moved into the nave, singing the *Salve* with tones so sweet and joyous that they might have thought their voices were already mingling with the Angel choirs. Then they knelt, turning to the altar, and Sadoc walked through the ranks and gave the accustomed sprinkling of holy water. It was at this moment that the door of the church burst open, and a band of Tartars rushed in; their hands and garments were dripping with blood, and their whole appearance was savage and revolting. They advanced tumultuously towards the kneeling friars, but for a moment the scene before them seemed to strike them with awe, and they paused as if under the influence of a supernatural presence. They might well feel it so, as they marked that kneeling row of figures clothed in white habits, whose faces, turned towards the Heaven about to receive them, already wore something of celestial beauty. Not a head was moved, not a voice faltered; the words of the anthem were sung as clearly and sweetly as ever: '*Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exilium ostende.*' They were the last they were to utter; the barbarians recovered from their momentary astonishment, and with a yell of savage malice rushed on them where they knelt. They fell with those words upon their lips, singing as they died.

"One alone moved from his place, and seemed touched by a feeling of terror. He rose and turned to fly, but a wonderful sign was given him

that restored his courage. 'For,' says the old chronicle which records this history, 'he perceived that the dismembered and mangled bodies of his companions uttered in accents of superhuman melody the last words of the anthem; whereupon, casting away all base and cowardly fear, he offered himself to the swords of the Tartars.

"In the Office granted in their memory by Pope Pius VII., the words which they are recorded to have been singing at the moment of their massacre are introduced into the collect: '*Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exilium ostende.*' Pope Alexander IV., in whose reign they were martyred, granted singular privileges to all who in their honour should visit the church of Sandomir, and their festival is still observed there with extraordinary devotion and splendour."

Another incident relating to the singing of the *Salve* finds a fitting place here. You were very young when on July 4, 1898, at daybreak, the French transatlantic liner, the *Bourgogne*, was wrecked by a collision during a dense fog opposite New York. Three Dominican Fathers of the Lyons Province, the Prior, the Prefect, and a young one recently ordained, were on board, starting for Europe. The *Irish Rosary Magazine* shall tell us how they died:

"And what came of those white-robed friars three?
Were they, too, struggling blindly; or had they
Safe on some boat or raft got far away
Before the French ship foundered in the sea?

Nought of the kind. Calm and composed, and free
From earthly fears, they wend their holy way
Amidst the sufferers on the wreck, and say
Kind words to each ; speak of eternity,
Of God's dear love and pardon freely given
To those who, in their hour of dire distress,
Repentant turn to Him in highest Heaven ;
And then they raise anointed hands to bless,
And absolution give from Him to all
Who on Christ's Precious Blood for mercy call.

"St. Dominic's heroes ! long as time shall last,
And his great Order its traditions keep,
This act of yours upon the mighty deep
Shall live amongst the annals of the past !
But now they kneel ; and hark ! across the vast
Abyss of waters floats a sudden sweep
Of song triumphant, and the billows leap
Round the doomed ship to listen. 'Tis the last
Sublime petition by their death-beds sung :
Salve Regina ! Et spes nostra, salve !
Et Jesum benedictum, up to heaven it rung ;
Nobis post hoc exilium ostende.
Our Lady heard. The waves obeyed her nod,
The friars woke to see the face of God."

As for you, dear children, while you are waiting to be with God, may God be with you ! Good-bye !

Ever yours devotedly,
A. Z.

THE END

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